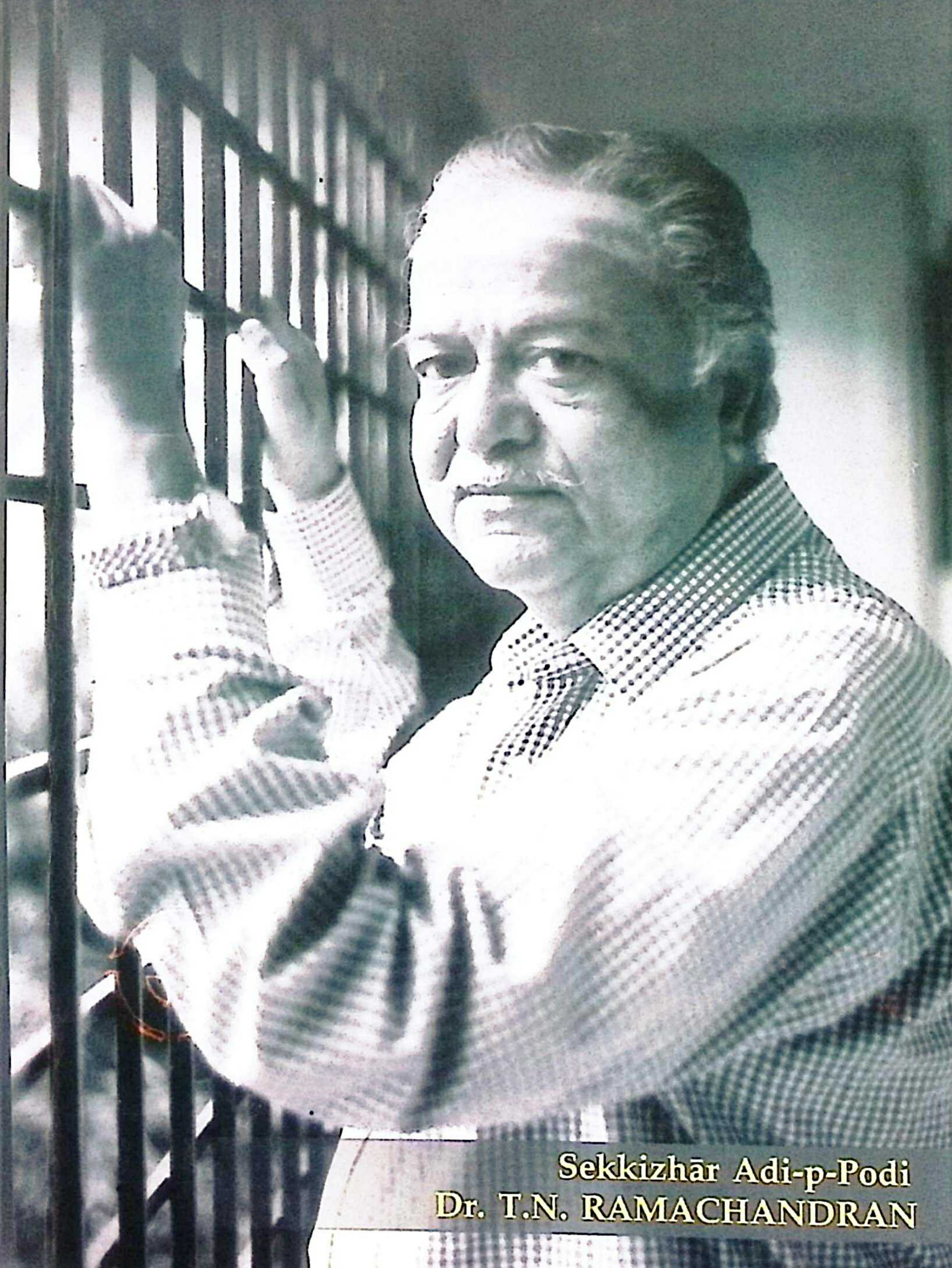
LECTURES AND ESSAYS



Sekkizhār Adi-p-Podi
Dr. T.N. RAMACHANDRAN

LECTURES AND ESSAYS

SEKKIZHĀR ADI-P-PODI
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Foreword

Sekkizhār Adi-p-Podi Dr. T.N.R. is my mentor. I have listened to him and read him on a number of occasions. His article entitled 'Abhinavagupta' appeared in Swar Bharati, 2012. I extract below what is indited by the editor.

"About the writer:

"An unsurpassed scholar in Tamil and English; an acknowledged authority on Tamil Saivism and Saiva Siddhanta; a prolific writer on several facets of Tamil hagiographical literature; a versatile translator of Tamil Saivite scriptures like Tiruvāchakam, Tirukkovaiyar, Tirumantiram, Periya Puranam and the hymns of Kāraikkāl Ammaiyar among many others — Dr.T.N.Ramachandran is not just a man but is indeed a procession of men.

"He was enrolled as an advocate of the High Court of Judicature, Madras in 1956, but despite his professional preoccupation, he always found time for studying the great literatures of both Tamil and English with remarkable enthusiasm and dedication. His most valuable quality is his unique and unquenchable love of world literature, in particular of poetry, of all periods and peoples."

"He was one of the nineteen people honoured during the Birth-Centenary Celebration of Maha Kavi Bharati. The Jaffna University confered on T.N.R. the Degree: 'Doctor of Literature.' He has delivered lectures in the Temples and the Tamil Association at London in 1997. He has also delivered lectures in Jaffna and Colombo during October, 2001."

Well, to complete the encomia showered on T.N.R. I should say that he visited London four times, Paris once and Avila (Spain) in 2002 where he participated in an International Seminar.

He first delivered his English lecture in the Serfoji College, at Thanjavur, in 1958. He spoke on 'Birds and Bards.' He addressed the Undergraduate students. Hearing his lecture, Prof. Joseph Chinnappa under whom T.N.R. studied in St. Joseph's College, said: 'indigestably heavy.'

Pujya Sri Dayananda Saraswati, hearing about T.N.R. sent word to him to conduct a worship on Value-based Education. Here, T.N.R. stressed on the triad of difficulties with which every teacher is confronted. He placed before the participants of this workshop the famous words of Dr. Johnson who said: "... no body can be taught faster than he can learn. The speed of the horseman must be limited by the power of his horse." T.N.R. condemned and contemned nursery rhymes which are bound to demoralise our children. He insisted that the elementary school curriculam must include the basic works of Avvaiyar than whom there is no greater instructor.

A workshop relating to Vedic culture was held in Chennai and the participants belonged to Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. T.N.R. brought to the notice of the participants how Vedic culture is embedded in Tamil Sankam Literature. T.N.R.'s opening words swept the audience off their feet. He said: "In four simple words, Mahakavi Bharati – the Bard of Bharat –, enacts a double celebration: "வேதம் நிறைந்த தமிழ்நாடு ..." Yes, Tamil Nadu is surcharged with the spirit of the Vedas. Even to-day, "in every nook and corner of Tamil Nadu, an amber scent of odorous perfume is the harbinger of Vedic recitation, the chanting resonance of which is enchanting."

The Tolkāppiyam, the most ancient Tamil work extant, sings in full-throated ease of the peerlessness of the Vedic deities. T.N.R. quoted from Kuruntokai, Patitruppatthu, Puranānūru, etc. His quotes from Ambedkar came as a revalation. He brought to the notice of the participants that the foreign critics of the Vedas did not dare to utter a word in arimadversion of the Bible, and thus debunked their inborn prejudice. He also pointed out that a certain section of the Tamils who swear by the Sankam Literature draws an iron-curtain over the Vedic references abounding in it.

I think I must make a special reference to the speech of T.N.R. on "National Integration Through Literature." The meeting was held on 14.12.1996 under the presidentship of the Former President of Bharat, Hon'ble R.Venkataraman. This speech captivated the entire audience. Listening to this speech with care and attention, the President observed: "I have heard many speakers on this topic. However T.N.R. has eclipsed them all."

T.N.R. laid stress on one basic point. The Government of Bharat did ill to wipe out the joint Hindu Family and Tarward systems which served as the foundation of integration. The Act relating to the ceiling on Land-holding has shattered into smithereens that which was fostered over the millennia. Alas, now our government waxes eloquent on national integration. In my view, it is like the fiat of our government which declares the use of tobacco as tabu but permits the opening of any number of liquor shops.

T.N.R. wound up his speech with this significant observation.

."In sorrow we must go, but not in despair. For, Integration divinely bestowed is meant to be solid and whole. It will survive, not thanks to us, but in spite of us."

Dr. Rama Ghosh, a Bangalee well-versed in Tamil Saivism, arranged a Seminar in the Benares Hindu University and saw to it that T.N.R. attended it and delivered a speech on the Tirukkalitruppadiyār. She even permitted T.N.R. to exceed the time-limit allotted to him. In this connection I should mention that T.N.R.'s translation of the Tirukkalitruppadiyār and the Tiruvuntiyār appeared in print in 2003. Though these two works appeared earlier than Meykantar's Sivagnānabhotham, these two formed part of the fourteen Meykanta Sastras. These two deal with the Yoga aspect of Saivism.

The Tirukkalitruppadiyār makes it clear that Siva is Ammai-Appar; in other words Siva is Mother cum Father. His is the androgynic form. That indeed is the truth which is sharply alive to the maternal aspect of God. T.N.R. declared that according to John Milton who is hailed as Maha Muni by T.N.R., God is at once masculine and feminine.

Magna Mater, Grace, Mercy, Sakti and Siva's Consort: These are the names of Uma who is inseparable from Siva. The Tirukkalitruppadiyār is a verse commentary on the Tiruvuntiyār. It abundantly makes use of the Periya Purānam, which truly speaking is 'Applied Saiva Siddhanta.' The message of this sastra is this: "Casting away all attachment and getting solely attached to Siva and His servitors spells true freedom, that is deliverance."

"The Florarama of the Kurunji-p-Pāttu,' a flower-fragrant speech, was delivered by T.N.R. in the Bharatidāsan University, Trichy. I was present when T.N.R. delivered his lecture.

Flowers play a vital role in Tamil literature – secular, religions or spiritual. God is the subtlest of the subtle. So, flowers are offered in puja to God. The fragrance of the flower is subtle and impalpable.

Flowers are symbolic: rosemary of remembrance, fennel of flattery, columbines of cuckoldry, rue (herb of grace) of sorrow, daisy of dissembling and violets of faithfulness.

The flower Kurinji blooms only once in twelve years. It is therefore peculiar, that is, peerless.

T.N.R. concluded his lecture thus. God is Pati; man is Pasu and flower is Pāsam. It is to comprehend the meaning of these Tripadārtha, I, a Saiva Siddhantin, am endeavouring hard over the years."

T.N.R. was a great admirer of Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar. Ever since he first called on the great professor in 1980, he made it a point to visit him whenever he was at Chennai. T.N.R.'s association with the professor's family was so close, that on one occasion, Tiru Ambirajan the Professor's son, when introducing T.N.R. to his friend said: "T.N.R. indeed is esteemed as the first son of my father."

The Sahitya Akademi celebrated the Birth-Centenary of Professor K.R.S., in 1906. His daughter Dr.Prema Nanda Kumar saw to it that T.N.R. was invited on that occasion to present his paper on Prof. K.R.S.

Prof.K.R.S. wrote in trenchant verse highlighting vital topics and these verses were later printed in a book-form titled "Leaves From A Log." T.N.R.'s paper related to an assessment of this work. He was also chosen to chair a session.

Of the prowess of the professor, T.N.R. observed thus: "Immense indeed is our Professor's power of communication. He hit the nail on the head. The nail, however, did not make any dent on a blockhead. Alas, India that is Bharat is replete with nail-proof stupidity and obstinacy."

This is how T.N.R. completed his speech. "Srinivasa is the Lord with whom Sri is concorporate. Sri is Maha Lakshmi – the Goddess of uberty – physical, metaphysical and spiritual."

"To chelas like me Srinivasa is K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar. His very name for us in a salvific mantra. We chant this mantra and stand blessed. Srinivasa Mangalam. Om Tat Sat."

Though T.N.R. did not approve of A.K. Ramanujam's translation of Tamil verses into English, his admiration for A.K.R. was genuine. In a seminar held at Trichy, he spoke on "Atthippattu Krishnaswami Ramanujam's Contribution to Sankam Literature."

According to T.N.R., A.K.R. spoke and wrote in American. "His style is simple, direct, terse and apt. He scrupulously avoids what are called poetic words and phrases. His rendition is manly."

T.N.R. observed thus: "A.K.R. spoke Tamil at home, Kannada outside his house and English in academic circles. His English became American when he settled in the United States."

It was A.K.R. who furnished the key to understand the Akam verses of the Sankam. He introduced a very simple method which is even today followed by translators of Akam verses.

In his speech T.N.R. pointed out the mistranslations of A.K.R. without indulging in severe animadversion. He concluded his speech thus:

"When A.K.R. recites his translation his voice weaves a net of magic into which his listener willingly gets trapped. His is the Siren's Song and its ravishment is ineluctable."

T.N.R.'s Seminar paper entitled 'Contributions of the realm of Thanjavur to Tamil Literature' is a remarkable piece of condensation. The Seminar was held by the Tamil University to highlight the manifold glory of the first millennial year of the Big Temple at Thanjavur.

Though the region of Trichy is also part of the old Chola Nādu, T.N.R. did not dwell on it. The realm of Thanjavur alone was dealt with by him. He lists the names of the Sankam poets of this realm who are eighteen in number.

Tirumūlar who settled at Sātthanūr, Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār, St. Tirugnānasambandhar, St. Sundarar, Kandarātitthar, Nambi Kāta Nambi, Tiruvāli Amutanār, Centanār, Nambi Āndar Nambi, Tiruviyalūr Uyyavanta Deva, Tirukkadavur Uyyavanta Deva, Tondar Adi-p-Podi Āzhwar, Tirumangkai Āzhwar, Periyavācchān Pillai, Kambar, Ottakkūtthar, Jayamkondār and many others have highlighted the greatness of Tamil. He also dealt with the 19th and 20th century scholars like Kottaiyūr Sivakkozhuntu Desikar, Maha Vidwan

Minākshisundaram Pillai, U.Ve.Swaminatha Iyer, Thiagaraja Chettiyar and others. Coming to modern times, he spoke of Vedanāyakam Pillai, Pinnatthūr Narayanaswami Iyer, Venkataswami Nāttār and others.

The Chitra Kavi P.V.Abdul Gaffoor, Palliagraharam N.Kandasami Pillai, Nāllādai Balakrishna Mudaliyar and others have not escaped T.N.R.'s attention. Pandita Vidwan T.V. Gopala Iyer, Pāvalar Balasundaram and Tiruloka Sitaram claim our special attention.

In the world of Literature Tamil occupies a place which is ever-during.

I opened my Foreword with a quotation of the editor of Swar Bharati. Now I come back to the souvenir. I know T.N.R. to be a cognoscente of Saiva Siddhantam. I also know that he is well versed in Virasaivam. I never knew that he was conversant with Kashmir Saivism. Only after my perusal of T.N.R.'s article on Abhinavagupta, I learnt of the quintessential message of Kashmir Saivism. I also learnt that there are varieties of Kashmir Saivism. I will quote hereunder what T.N.R. has written in the concluding part of his article.

Before that, I must refer to his articles on the Tiruvāchakam.

This volume contains two articles on the Tiruvāchakam. One deals with 'The Contemporary Relevance of the Tiruvāchakam.'

The Tiruvāchakam, according to T.N.R. is the spiritual biography of St.Mānikkavāchakar. It is the Tiruvāchakam that has palpably impacted the foreign scholars. Its reverence for life is immense. The verses of this work is radiantly autochthonous and bracingly modern. Nature is God's creation. The Tiruvāchakam repeatedly dins into us that God indwells every atom, every sub-atom and every sub-sub-atom.

Again, God is all though all is not God. Our Saint spoke of scientific truths casually, but with such precision and accuracy that stun modern scientists. Tenets of many a goodly 'ology', 'onomy', and 'doxy' can be gleaned from the Tiruvāchakam.

Well, when these and such as these were heard from T.N.R., the scholars who had gathered in Avila stood tongue-tied as he spoke on 'Mysticism in Saint Mānickavāchakar's Tiruvāchakam." In his lecture T.N.R. dwelt on his life, the right hermeneutics that will help one understand our Saint's works, their universality of appeal and their everlasting truths.

Mānickavāchakar was initiated into Saivism by Mahaḍeva Siva Himself. Be it remembered that spiritual manumission for us is spelt with ease by the bone-melting verses of the Tiruvāchakam.

I will now come back to Abhinava Gupta. This is how T.N.R. concludes his essay on Abhinavagupta.

"Abhinavagupta made it plain that Saivism does not admit the bifurcation of religion and philosophy. He also declared that there are gradations in practice (Sadhana).

"In fine, he was the greatest Āchārya of the Monistic Saivism of Kashmir. His place among the Monist Saivism is the same as that of Sankarāchārya's in Advaita Vedanta and that of Meykantār's in Saiva Siddhanta.

"Abhinavagupta is, indeed the guru of gurus."

"When comes such another!"

03.07.2014 - Dr. A. Dakshinamūrthy
Thanjavur

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1. Birds and Bards

Birds and Bards! What a harmonious concatenation. Birds are the bards of the non-human world. "நேசக்கவிதை சொலும் பறவை" (birds that lisp endearing poesy) are the words of the bard Bharati. Bards are the birds of the human world. Is not Sarojini Naidu, the Nightingale of India?

Melody as well as music is the content of both the bird-song and the bard-song. The melody of the bard is built with words; the melody of the bird, without words. The poets rhyme with words; the birds chime without words. The birds for ever warble a wordless melody as Tagore would call it. Man too, at times tunes a wordless melody in the form of Aalaapana, which is called preamble, by Maha Muni Milton. Remember the words of grandmother Avvai: "இழுக்குடைய பாட்டிற்கு இசை நன்று" "Humming is far superior to a bad song."

Birds and bards are of the same family. The words of the birds if I may say so, are audible to the bards only. Take for instance, Kuruvikkoodu, a famous poem by the bard Tiruloka Sitaram. A male sparrow and its spouse were engaged in a confabulation. The poet heard it. We too can hear; but we cannot decipher what we have heard.

This is the tete-a-tete betwixt the male bird and his mate who is in the family way.

M -	நாரெடு நாரெடு நாரெடு புல்லின்	Gather fibre, gather fibre
	கூறிடு வைக்கோல் கூளம் எடு எடு	Smother grass, gather hay.
F -	கூடொரு கோட்டை கட்டிய பின்னர்	In gust of wind as in swing
	ஆடிடு தென்றல் ஆடுவம் ஊசல்	We shall wing, we shall wing.

M -	கூடொரு வீடும் கூடிட நீயும்	A nest to nestle, a chit to cuddle
	கோதுகலத்தில் குலவிடல் இன்பம்.	Let us coddle, bill and coo.
	நாரெடு நாரெடு நாரெடு நாணற்	Gather fibre, gather fibre
	புல்லொடு சிம்பு கிழித்திடு முடைய	Reed and grass, rive and weave.
F -	முடைந்தொருகோட்டை மோகனம்பாடி	Home, sweet home, to sing & soar
	முயங்கிடுவோம் நாம் மூடிடு கதவை.	Shut the door to joy the more.
M -	பேடென நின்னைப் பெற்றதென் பேறே	My boon thou art, ay my chit
	பேற்றினள் நீயுனைப் பேணுவன்	Thou art gravid, I'll thee guard.
	பெண்ணே.	

Well ... The birds may warble, sing, carol, pipe, whistle, trill, chir, roll, twitter, tweet, twit, chirp, chirrup, cheep, peep, pip or yap. But all the arcana of their melody are at once revealed to the poetic ear.

A kuyil sings in a garden. Mahakavi Bharati listens to its worldless melody. Lo, he captures it and embalms the rhapsody in ever-during Tamil poesy.

You see, the ears of the poet are ready-tuned to the bird's melody. Of all men, the poet alone beholds the glint of harmony which lies hid and invisible to mortal eyes, in the bird-song. But the bard receives it with a 1000 tentacles of awareness, and, what is more surprising, he is able to transmit it also. He but gives a hint in words which haunts us for ever. There is therefore between the bird and the bard, an ineluctable sodality, an inescapable tie. But this escapes not only our sight but our vision also.

Birds are dear to bards. Each bard had his favourite bird. Shakespeare loves the nightingale; so too Milton. Keats ditto. Shelley's bird is the skylark. Browning loves the chaffinch and the thrush. Tennyson adores doves. Strangely, the American poet Edgar Alan Poe has a fancy, for the raven.

Bards of Tamil and Sanskrit love Hamsa (Swan), the crowncha which is அன்றில், the Chakora or Chakravaaha which subsists on moon-beams and Kuyil which is koel or Kokila. Sarojini Naidu, herself a bard, is a lover of the Koel, the nightingale, the papeeha, the lapwing, the oriole, the dhadikula, the peacock and the pigeon. The birds of Sarojini are found perched on gulmohars, champaka branches, sirisha trees, kadamba clefts, henna sprays or asoka twigs.

Take the nightingale. Nightingale, by derivation means the night-singer. It is so called as it sings usually in the night. Juliet tells Romeo:

"Nighty she sings on yon pomogranate tree

Believe me, my love, it is the nightingale."

Nightingale is the warbler known as Daulias lusciana. It is a small insectivorous migratory bird of brownish colour, very much celebrated for its vocal powers. This is Milton's favourite. His grand epopee, Paradise Lost, abounds in several references to this bird. He has composed a whole sonnet on this bird. Indeed the very first of his sonnets is on this bird. Says Milton in his Sonnet, that this bird warbles at eve when the woods are still and that this bird by its liquid notes closes the eye of day. The Cuckoo's music is shallow compared to that of the nightingale. Muse and Lovevie with each other in claiming this bird. Says Milton:

"Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate

Both them I serve and of their train am I."

Milton has studied the habits of Nightingale. He refers to it in lines 38 to 40, Book III, Paradise Lost, as "the wakeful bird" – that "sings darkling in the shadiest covert hid." He calls it "the solemn bird" in two places in Book III of Paradise Lost. Book V, line 40 has this reference viz., 'the night warbling bird!

Further reference are there in Books VII and VIII, in Comus and Il Penseroso. But the best description of this bird occurs in Book IV, Paradise Lost. Says Milton:

"Now came still evening on and twilight gray

Had in her sober livery all things clad;

Silence accompanied; for the beast and bird

They to their grassy couch and these to their nests

Were slunk."

And now comes the warbler to close the eye of day with its liquid notes.

The beasts and the birds were slunk:

"... all but the wakeful nightingale."

The wakeful bird charms Eden with the magic of her music. Says Milton:

"She all night her amorous descant sung

Silence was pleased."

Now listen. It is not a plain song that the bird sang. It is a descant, a tuneful lay of pleasing variations. The melody of the English Cuckoo is a monotony. But the nightingale melodizes her notes in rhythmic variety. Again it is amour, and not melancholy, which is the theme of her song. Small wonder, Silence was pleased.

Tho' it is the male bird that sings, the singing is traditionally attributed to the female bird. Thereby hangs a tale. What tale is it? The unfortunate girl, Philomel turned into a nightingale. Through Lavinia, Shakespeare narrates this speechless metamorphosis in Titus

Andronicus. So, nightingale is Philomel, the girl. But Cowpes sets the record straight when he sings thus:

> "A nightingale that all day long
> Had cheered the village with his song."

Within the time permitted me, I will descant on one or two more birds.

Now comes the Skylark.

The Skylark is the Ethereal Ministrel, the pilgrim of the sky. This finds its place in Milton's Lallegro. It is this bird which inspired Shelley to compose one of loftiest of poems that English can boast of. Gray took 8 years to polish his Elegy. Shelley wrote his Skylark, just like that, in less time than one would take time to say Chakravarthi Rajagopalachariar. Shelley's Skylark is a wandering voice, an unbodied joy. It rains melodic nectar. It warbles at dawn to ope the eye of day.

Then comes the cuckoo. The English cuckoo is not to be confused with the Indian Kuyil. In the proem to my notes on The Song of the Kuyil, this is what I have written.

Every one in India would have at some point of time in his life heard the Kuyil. To most of us, the song of the Kuyil was and is nothing but a monotonous continuum of some notes of musical hieroglyphics. But Bharati listened to the bird-song with his inner ear. He took out his 'elemental pencil' and with ease recorded all the rhapsodic arcana which lay hid in the song of the Kuyil. Now, behold this wonder, a lyric of gold.

The Gita Govinda of Jaya Deva abounds in many references to the Koel. The Koel at springtime flutes her love nigh the Jumna where the canes are thick. Love-sick Radha, afire with shy desire, listens to its fluten notes in a *keetuk* glade. This lass unparalleled is burning with love for Krishna who is *Chanthana Charchitha Neela Kalebara* Peethavasana Vanamaali.

Birds have wings; so too the bards who employ 'winged words'. Homer calls these *epea pteroenta*.

- Homer (Illiad 1, 201)

One must remember that it is the male bird that sings; but the female steals all the credit.

That indeed is the way of the world.

2. Workshop on Value-Based Education

24.01.2008: Manjakkudi

May the Dancer at Tillai us protect!

My humble obeisance to H.H. Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati Maharaj!

Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor and friends!

It is a kind overflow of kindness on the part of the origanisers of the workshop on 'Value-Based Education' to have invited me to deliver the key-note address.

In my humble view John Milton who is hailed by me as a Maha-Muni, is superior to Shakespeare, even as the Upanishads are superior to the Itihāsas. In 1638 Milton left England and went first to Paris whence he came to Italy. He stayed in Florence for a couple of months. From Florence he went to Sienna and from Sienna to Rome. He also visited Naples. "His purpose was now to have visited Sicily and Greece; but hearing of the differences between the King and Parliament" says Johnson "he thought it proper to hasten home, rather than pass his life in foreign amusements while his countrymen were contending for their rights."

On his return he hired a lodging in St. Bride's Churchyard and undertook the education of Edward and John Philips, his sister's sons. Finding his rooms too little he took (1641) a house and garden in Aldersgate-street. I will now place before you the observations of Dr.Johnson.

"Let not our veneration for Milton forbid us to look with some degree of merriment on great promises and small performance — on the man who hastens home because his countrymen were contending for their liberty, and, when he reaches the scene of action, vapours away his patriotism in a private boarding school. This is the period of life from which all his biographers seem inclined to shrink. They are unwilling that Milton should be degraded to a school-master; but since it cannot be denied that he taught boys, one finds out that he taught for nothing, and another that his motive was only zeal for the propagation of learning and virtue; and all tell what they do not know to be true, only to excuse an act which no wise man will consider as in itself disgraceful...

"It is told that in the art of education he performed wonders; and a formidable list is given of the authors, Greek and Latin, that were read in Aldersgate-street, by youth between ten and fifteen or sixteen years of age. Those who tell or receive these stories should consider that no body can be taught faster than he can learn. The speed of the horsemen must be limited by the power of his horse. Every man that has undertaken to instruct others, can tell what slow advances he has been able to make, and how much patience it requires to recall vagrant inattention, to stimulate sluggish indifference, and to rectify absurd misapprehension." I must now pause and essay to inscribe in the minds of the scholars assembled here the triad of tasks which every teacher faces. He has to recall vagrant inattention, to stimulate sluggish indifference and to rectify absurd misapprechension.

The meaning of education as posited by St.Sekkizhār is truly illuminating. I will deal with this later.

Ṭhat indeed is a valuable work which is free from defects. These are a decad.

குன்றக்கூறல் மிகைபடக் கூறல்
கூறியது கூறல் மாறு கொளக் கூறல்
வழூஉச் சொல் புணர்த்தல் மயங்கவைத்தல்
வெற்றெனத் தொடுத்தல் மற்றொன்று விரித்தல்
சென்று தேய்ந்து இறுதல் நின்று பயன் இன்மை
என்று இவை ஈரைங் குற்ற நூற்கே.

This twelfth sutra of the Nannūl stands translated by the great Eurasian scholar, The Rev. H. Bower as follows:

"The ten faults or improprieties to be avoided by every writer are: paucity of words; prolixity; tautology; contradiction; the use of incorrect or inappropriate words; confusion or ambiguity; too great simplicity or unrefinedness; irrelevancy or far-fetchedness; unequalness (from the sublime descending to the ridiculous); unmeaningness or unprofitableness."

The modern media are fascinated by panjandrums who suffer from logorrhoea. Truly speaking logorrhoea is a diarrhoea of words ineluctably linked with a constipation of thought.

பயனில்சொல் பாராட்டுவானை மகன் எனல்
மக்கட் பதடி எனல்.

Before dealing with the qualifications of a teacher let us learn of his disqualification. The Nannūl says: "Persons disqualified to be teachers are: those who are devoid of natural talent for imparting knowledge; who are of a mean disposition; jealous or envious; avaricious; deceitful; intimidating the minds of scholars by magnifying difficulties; and those who on account of their untractableness bear comparison to (a) marbles in a pot, (b) to a rough palmyra tree, (c) to a cotton-holder, and (d) to a crooked cocoanut tree.

An immethodical teacher is compared to marbles in a pot; because marbles in a pot do not lie in order or regularity, but promiscuously and in confusion.

An inaccessible teacher is compared to a rough palmyra tree, on account of the difficulty of having access to its fruit, unless is drops it spontaneously.

A half-instructed teacher is compared to a cotton-holder, or tinder-box, which receives through its small aperture little by little with great difficulty, and then dispenses little by little with greater difficulty.

A neglectful teacher is compared to a recumbent cocoanut tree which leans over and drops its fruit into a stranger's ground, and deprives the owner of the fruit.

Friends, I appeal to you to cultivate our Mahakavi Bharati. The great bard combines in himself the best of the most ancient as well as the best of the most modern. Please study with due care his poem - கண்ணன் என் சீடன். The poem opens thus:

யானே யாகி என்னலாற் பிறவாய்
யானும் அவையுமாய் இரண்டினும் வேறாய்
யாதோ பொருளாம் மாயக் கண்ணன்
... ...

A true translation of these lines is as follows:

Me he is and also other than me
Which is not me; yet 's he of me and them;
And from me and these is he different;
He is something mystic and mysterious,
The illusive Kannan . . .

Can you get at the meaning of these lines even by reading it repeatedly? This is not the occasion for me to display the methods of hermeneutics.

I published my translation of Kannan Pāttu in 1980. I will place before you a few passages from my Introductory Remarks.

"Teaching is a dismal science. Lord Halifax said: "The vanity of teaching often tempts a man to forget he is blockhead."

Well, the secret of education lies in respecting/ loving the pupil. A teacher who is a high-brow learns very late in his life his lesson. So, a necessity arises sometimes to educate the masters.

The raison d'etre of the current workshop is intended to enlighten the enlighteners.

I repeat after Shakeapeare and say that no comma infects the course I hold. I am myself a teacher in my own way. I have strained every nerve of mine over the past 35 years to propagate Saiva Siddhantam. I confess I have achieved precious little. Yet I plod my weary way in the hope that I have not laboured in vain. Visible or palpable results are hard to come by. Yet one should proceed undaunted. The result is in the lap of gods.

Regimentation and rigid insistence on absolute flawlessness may not constitute education. In the field of liberal education these may tend to become mechanical monstrosities. These thrive on pettiness. They usher in myopia.

A stern and strict teacher is more wooden than his ferule. The teacher and the taught are to be governed by the rule of love. The rule of ferule has no room in a class room.

A teacher should embrace his pupils with a thousand hands of love. He should not fetter them with a thousand tentacles.

The aim of instruction is to help the bloom of wisdom unpetal slowly, softly and imperceptibly. The fragrance then fills the world and wields a purificatory influence.

St. Appar was christened Marulneekki. As a child he underwent the ritual ceremony of tonsure and was then sent to the school.

மருள்நீக்கியார் சென்னி மயிர் நீக்கும் மணவினையும்

தெருள் நீர்ப்பன் மாந்தரெலாம் மகிழ்சிறப்பச் செய்ததற்பின்

பொருள்நீத்தம் கொளவீசிப் புலன் கொளுவ மனம் முகிழ்த்த

சுருள்நீக்கி மலர்விக்கும் கலை பயிலத் தொடங்குவித்தார்.

The ceremony of tonsure was done to
Marulneekkiyar

To the great delight of a great many wise men;

Then people were plied with gifts which flowed
like floods.

This done, he was initiated into the art of
instruction

Which by enlightenment uncoils the coiled *manam*.

[Note that manam is not mind. Mind is consciousness. Manam is but an evolute of matter.]

சுருள் நீக்கி மலர்விக்கும் கலை. That is education. Education is derived from the root educere which means to draw out, guide, unfold.

The teacher's task is to straighten what remains coiled. This is a delicate job and only a teacher blessed with understanding can do this. This understanding is to be informed by love.

The relationship between the teacher and the pupil is one of longing and belonging. The teacher must long for his pupil and the pupil must belong to his teacher.

The pupil is indeed the pupil of the teacher's eye. Loving eye-lids must ever protect the pupil.

A word about the classification of readers. Amplifying the dicta of Kalidasa, St. Umapati observed as follows:

தொன்மை யவாம் எனும் எவையும் நன்றாகா இன்று
    தோன்றிய நூல் எனும் எவையும் தீதாகா துணிந்த
நன்மையினார் நலங்கொள் மணி பொதியுமதன் களங்கம்
    நவையாகாதென உண்மை நயந்திடுவர் நடுவாந்
தன்மையினார் பழமை அழ காராய்ந்து தரிப்பர்
    தவறுநலம் பொருளின் கட் சார்வா ராய்ந்தறிதல்
இன்மையினார் பலர் புகழில் ஏத்துவர் ஏதிலற்
    றிகழ்ந்தனரேல் இகழ்ந்திடுவர் தமக்கென ஒன்றிலரே.

Ancientness confers not merit on works;
Nor is flaw attached to works newly writ;
The discerning when they examine gems
Covered by dirt, know that dirt belongs not
To gems; wise men supreme prize truth in works
And ignore expressions infelicitous.
The-not-so-great will profit by new works
If they do contain hoary excellence.
If others praise they praise; if they dispraise
They too condemn; these are sure void of sense.

A passage from 'Lectures on Shakespeare ...' by S.T.Coleridge who quotes from Mishna, is in point.

"Readers may be divided into four classes:

1. Sponges who absorb all they read and return it nearly in the same state, only a little dirtied.
2. Sand-glasses, who retain nothing, and are content to get through a book, for the sake of getting through the time.
3. Strain-bags, who retain merely the dregs of what they read.
4. Mogul diamonds, equally true and valuable, who profit by what they read, and enable others to profit by it also."

Of learners the Nannūl says:

அன்னம் ஆவே மண்ணொடு கிளியே

இல்லிக் குடம் ஆடெருமை நெய்யரி

அன்னர்தலை இடை கடை மாணாக்கர்.

There are three classes of scholars or students; the good, the middling and the bad; the good are compared to a swan, or a cow; the middling are compared to the ground, or a parrot; and the bad are compared to a pot full of holes, a goat, a buffalo, or the web of a cocoanut or palmyra tree.

The method of study

ஒரு குறி கேட்போன் இருகாற் கேட்பின்
பெருக நூலிற் பிழை பாடிலனே.

He who has studied a work once and has gone over it (carefully) a second time, will overcome difficulties and understand it better.

முக்காற் கேட்பின் முறை அறிந்து உரைக்கும்.

If he has revised a work three times, he will master it, having the teacher's instructions indelibly fixed in his mind.

ஆசான் உரைத்த தமைவரக் கொளினும்
காற் கூறல்லது பற்றலன் ஆகும்.

Though he has fully digested all the instructions of a teacher he will only have attained to one fourth part of perfection.

அவ்வினையாளரொடு பயில் வகை ஒருகால்

செவ்விதின் உரைப்ப அவ்விரு காலும்

மை அறு புலமை மாண் புடைத்தாகும்.

One fourth more of perfection is obtained by associating with learned fellow-students and the other half by imparting instructions to others in private, and by speaking (lecturing in public); this makes the accomplished scholar.

One should know the worth of words and their unique and athanasic value. I learnt this from my mentor, the late-lamented Telugu-born Tamil poet. Do lend me your ears.

சொற்களின் வரலாறு ஆச்சர்யமானது. அவை நம்மினும் மூத்தவை. நமக்கு முன் இங்கு வாழ வந்த கோடான கோடி மக்கள் பன்னெடுங்காலம் அவற்றை உச்சரித்திருக்கிறார்கள். அவர்களுடைய இன்ப துன்பங்கள், ஆசாபாசங்கள், வெற்றி வீழ்ச்சிகள் யாவும் மனோசக்திகளாகச் சொற்களைச் சுற்றிப் படர்ந்து ஏடுகளாகப் படிந்து அவற்றிற்குப் பொருளும், கனமும், சுவையும், உயிர்ப்பும் ஊட்டியிருக்கின்றன.

சொல்லும் பொருளும் ஒன்றுடன் ஒன்று கலந்தும், ஒன்றில் ஒன்று கரந்தும், ஒன்றுள் ஒன்று புதைந்தும், ஒன்றை ஒன்று கவிந்தும், இரண்டறக் கிடக்கின்றன. கிடக்கவே பொருள் சொல்லை உமிழும்; சொல் பொருளை விளைக்கும். சொற்களுக்கும் நம்மைப் போலவே அகப்புற வாழ்க்கைகள் உண்டு என்று உணர வேண்டும்.

யோக சமாதியில் ஆழ்ந்துள்ள ரிஷிகள் போல் ஒவ்வொரு சொல்லும் பொருள் நிறைந்து ததும்புகிறது.

கணந்தோறும் நாம் குதப்புகின்ற எண்ணற்ற சொற்களில் அவற்றின் புறப்பொருள் மட்டுமே பொலிகிறது. ஆழ்ந்த உணர்ச்சிகளைச் சுமந்து வரும் கவிதையில் சொற்களின் அக வாழ்வு மலர்ந்து வருகிறது.

சொற்களின் மர்மங்களை அறிந்த கவிஞர்களே சொல்லுக்கடங்கா இன்பங்களைச் சுட்டிக் காட்ட அச்சொற்களுககுக் கட்டளை இட வல்லவர்கள். அத்தகைய ஆற்றலர்களின் ஆணைக்கு இணங்கி அவர்களின் இதயத் துடிப்பிற்கு ஏற்பத் தாளம் தவறாமல் சொற்கள் ஆடிவருகின்ற நடனமே கவிதை.

He indeed is educated who knows how to wield words. Words are afire with our desire. They can make us or mar us. Learn how to employ words. Craftsmanship in words is a desideratum.

The worst havoc wrought by the Britishers is the introduction of their nursery rhymes in our curriculum.

Jack and Jill went up the hill

To fetch a pail water;

Jack fell down and broke his crown

And Jill came trembling after.

Is this what a child should learn from its teacher? Our system believes in *Niti Sastras.* The child should be indoctrinated in these precious sastras.

Does the Britishers, know what *niti* is. Now listen to what A.W. Rydar, the great scholar who translated the Panchatantra says: “The word *niti* means roughly “the wise conduct of life.” Western civilization must endure a certain shame that no precise equivalent of the term is found in English, French, Latin or Greek. Many words are therefore necessary to explain what *niti* is, though the idea once grasped, is clear, important and satisfying."

The works of Avvaiyār are Niti Sastras. Mahakavi Bharati announced thus: "If we are asked whether we will consent to lose all other wealth of Tamil Nadu or the works of Avvai, we will answer: "It does not matter if we are to be divested of all other wealth; never will we consent to suffer the loss of Mother Avvai's opuses." Bharati speaks of the Avvaiyar of Ātthisudi, Kondraiventhan, Mūdurai and Nalvazhi.

Kalā Samrakshana Sangkam founded by me published in 1996 a work entitled: 'Seven Ethico-Didactic Works In Tamil.' This work comprises the texts in Tamil and the translation in English and also in Sanskrit of Ātthisudi, Kondraiventhan, Mūdurai, Nalvazhi, Vetri Verkai, Nanneri and Niti Neri Vilakkam. The translators are Rev. S. Winfred, E.J. Robinson and others.

I daresay that these works form the foundation of 'Value-Based Education.' Modesty prevents me from descanting on the mulifoliate splendour of this opus. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. பாரத நாடு பழம் பெரு நாடு – நீர் இதன் புதல்வர், இந்நினைவு அகற்றாதீர். The world's first University was established in Takshashila in 700 B.C. More than 10,500 students from all over the world studied here more than sixty subjects. The University of Nalanda came into being in the 4th century B.C. It was one of the greatest achievements in the field of education. The famous scientist and Nobel Laureate Albert Einstein asseverated thus: "We owe a lot to the Indians who taught us how to count, without which knowledge no worthwhile scientific discovery could have been made." Mark Twain said: "India is the cradle of the human race, the birth place of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend and the great grandmother of tradition." The famous French scholar Romain Rolland said: "If there is one place on the face of earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India."

- Hindu Voice, January 2008.

Max Muller was entrusted with the task of denigrating the Vedas and the Vedic culture. He led the life of a prisoner in Oxford. The only occasion which gave him a chance to voice forth a few of his true feelings occurred when he was invited to deliver a course of lectures, specially intended for the candidates of the Indian Civil Service. He could, on this occasion, condemn the Universities the curriculam of which failed to shape the lives of scholars. The marketable value of the University education was deplored by him. The lack of emphasis on the permanent value for the whole of one's life who passed through the University really pained him. Education, he insisted, should vest the student with a real interest in his work, and more than that, a love of his work and a true joy and happiness in his work. "If a University can teach that" he said "if it can engraft that one small living germ in the minds of the young men who came here to study and prepare themselves for the battle of life, and, for what is still more difficult to encounter, the daily drudgery of life, then, I feel convinced, a University has done more, and conferred a more lasting benefit on the pupils than by helping them to pass the most difficult examinations ..." He boldly declared that Germany was more fortunate in this respect. He said: "A scholar who studies Sanskrit in Germany is supposed to be initiated in the deep and dark mysteries of ancient wisdom, and a man who has travelled in India, even if he has only discovered

Calcutta, or Bombay, or Madras is listened to like another Marco Polo.

Addressing the students he said: "If you care for geology, there is work for you from the Himalayas to Ceylon."

"If you are fond of botany, there is a flora rich enough for many Hookers."

"If you are a zoologist, think of Haeckel, who is just now rushing through Indian forests and dredging in Indian seas, and to whom his stay in India is like the realisation of the brightest dream of his life."

"If you are interested in ethnology, why, India is like a living ethnological museum."

"If you are fond of archaeology, if you have ever assisted at the opening of a barrow in England, and know the delight of finding a fibula, or a knife, or a flint in a heap of rubbish, read only General Cunningham's Annual Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India, and you will be impatient for the time when you can take your spade and bring to light the ancient Viharas or colleges built by the Buddhist monarchs of India."

Max Muller proceeds in this vein in great rapture.

'சரித்திரத் தேர்ச்சி கொள்' proclaimed Bharati. Now this is what Max Muller says. "Why do we want to know history? Why does history form a recognised part of our liberal education? Simply because all of us and every one of us, ought to know how we have come to be what we are, so that each generation need not start again from the same point and toil over the same ground, but profiting by the exprience of those who came before, may advance towards higher points and nobler aims."

Remember our Purānas are histories. He who can see may see and gain sight as well as insight.

The British have crippled our ancient educational system. Tagore founded his Sānti Niketan to preserve at least the traces of our hoary teaching system.

Our Bharati was not a millionaire. He could only bemoan audibly in verse our plight and this writing too was banned by the British.

"They cultivate Arithmetic for twelve
Whole years, but cannot tell the stars
of the sky;
A thousand wondrous epics they study,
But know not the poetic Muse profound;
Commerce and Economics they blabber,
But are blind to the nation's poverty.
The names of all Sastras, they know by rote,
Yet are not the slightest benefited."

"Throve Kamban, a true man; the lofty rhyme
Did Kalidasa build; the great Baskara
With mere eyes scaled the heavens and
measured
Sidereal hosts and orbs innumerable;
With miraculous skill Panini wrote
The erudite grammatical treatise;
To the depths of life phenomenal, dived
Sankara and declared Truth's nature true."

"On Cilambu sang the younger brother
Of the Chera; divine Valluvar composed
Heavenly scriptures; glorious Pandyas
And Cholas gave gifts of land and upheld
Dharma; with the sword of Grace, Asoka

Wielded his flawless sceptre; Shivaji
Hailed by the valorous, extirpated
The barbaric and alien tyranny."

"All these they learn not — they that in India
Enter schools of English education.
'The ancient glory that is India's past,
The ignominy that is its present,
And the state by her to be reached' – to them
Is unknown! Mad learners of eunuch-instruction!
My soul is all cinders because of these."

"Wanting to do me good, my good father
Whose heart was guileless, did assign poor me
To the deep pit of alien education –
The cruel black chasm insurmountable,
The horrendous cavern of the fierce beasts
Of evil delusion, doubt, apathy,
Rancorous wrangling and falsity foul."

"To the fibsters called 'Iyer' and 'Dorai
That taught what was claimed to be the art
Of English, I would this proclaim; listen:
"As I spent all my time on your lessons
I became fatigued; my heart grew timid;
Excessive doubt held me in its power;
Gone was my dear freedom, and my reason
Was tossed like a sliver on an ocean."

"This would I swear in thousands of temples:
'It cost my father a thousand, and what
I came by were evil many thousands;
Well-being, not a whit, was my portion.'

As a result of my former good deeds
And by the grace of our Bharat Devi,
Despite my fall into your mighty murk
I was somehow saved from dire destruction."

Bharati has catalogued for us the evils of valueless education. It is upto us to restore the values of education which as at present stand devalued.

Anō Bhathraha Krutavo entu Vishwatah.

Let noble thoughts come to us from all directions.

Om Santi, Santi, Santi.

A good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.

Studies serve for delight, for ornaments, and for ability.

But remember: To spend too much time in studies, in sloth.

Each one has one mouth and two ears. One must hear twice as much as one speaks.

Read not to contradict and confute.

Cultivate the art of assessing the worth of books. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested.

Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man and writing an exact man.

Read Bacon. His sayings are pithy and forceful. His style resembles Tiruvalluvar's. However, he is not to be considered the equal of Tiruvalluvar. Tiruvalluvar practised what he preached. He was a saintly law-giver.

Not so Bacon. To Macaulay Bacon is the angel of science and the Belial of morality.

Be not cowed by adversity. God tempers the wind for the shorn lamb.

The virtue of prosperity is temperance; the virtue of adversity is fortitude.

The merchant who cannot abide a bad market does not deserve a good one.

Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes.

Certainly virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed; for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.

So, get on, get honour and get honest.

3. Vedic Culture In Tamil Sankam Literature

Namas Satasé!

In four simple words, Mahakavi Bharati – the Bard of Bharat –, enacts a double celebration: "வேதம் நிறைந்த தமிழ்நாடு ..." It is thus he did sing and it is even thus it doth still ring in our ears. These four words defy translation. However, their message is very, very clear. Tamil Nādu is surcharged with the Vedas. In every nook and corner of Tamil Nādu, an amber scent of odorous perfume is the harbinger of the Vedic recitation, the chanting resonance of which is enchanting. The Vedas pervade Tamil Nādu and Tamil Nādu houses and treasures the Vedas. I am every inch a Tamil, and a *fortiori*, every millimetre a son of Bharat.

"பாரத நாடு பழம்பெருநாடு – நீரதன் புதல்வர்
இந்நினைவு அகற்றாதீர்."

[Vast and great and hoary is the land of Bharat;
You are its sons; never should you remove
this awareness from you.]

The ancient Tamils were a great race. Many of the modern Tamils are but pseudo. Whom can we blame? Alas, we suffer from ourselves; none else compels.

We were commanded to proclaim thus: "Eeswara Allah teré nām!" We obeyed and now we suffer for our obedience.

John Milton said that man's disobedience reversed the order of God. Here in India, man's obedience is man's undoing. Let us follow the Vedas and not the words of any leader who knows not the message of the Vedas.

The Tolkāppiyam, the most ancient Tamil work extant, sings in full-throated ease of the peerlessness of the Vedic deities. If this opus, a work on Grammar, should mirror the glory of the Vedas, does it not follow that the Tamil Sankam literature, now known as the product of Sankam the third, which came into being a couple of millennia or so ago, would revel in the Veda, and highlight their significance as often as necessary.

The Sankaṃ literature refers to the Vedas as மறை and வேதம். The Paripātal (3:11-12) refers to the Vedas as *Vāimozhi*. You may now be pleased to appreciate the significance of Nammāzhwar's major work 'Tiruvāimozhi.' In fact, the great Āzhwār is hailed as வேதம் தமிழ் செய்த மாறன் குருகூர்ச் சடகோபன்.

Verse 156 of the Kuruntokai refers to the Vedas as எழுதாக்கற்பு. கேள்வி is the name which the Patitruppatthu (166.4) attributes to the Vedas. The word கேள்வி is fraught with significance. The Vedas are learnt through hearing. The transmission is oral and is done by a competent teacher to chelas accustomed to utmost discipline.

Verse 166 of the Puranānūru hails the Vedas as muthunūl (முதுநூல்). No work more ancient than the Vedas ever existed. The Vedas also bear the name *muthu mozhi*.

By reason of their rare excellence the Vedas are hailed as அருமறை. As they are four in number they are also referred to as நான்மறை and நால்வேதம். As they were cultivated, in the main, by the Brahmins, Maduraikkānji calls them அந்தணர் வேதம், Paripātal அந்தணர் அருமறை and Puranānūru அந்தணனார் நான்மறை.

Puram 166 declares thus:

நன்றாய்ந்த நீள்நிமிர் சடை
முது முதல்வன் வாய் போகா
. . . . ஒரு முதுநூல் ...

The Vedas are ever on the lips of Lord Siva.

No wonder, my deity St. Sekkizhār said of Siva:

தூமறைபாடும் வாயார்.

Sri Krishna is referred to as வாய் வேதநாறி: the one from whose lips, the fragrance of the Vedas, wafts. We may therefore affirm that the Vedas are but the verbal manifestation of the supreme deity. They are therefore eternal, sempiternal and aeviternal.

Any attempt at dating the Vedas is bound to wind up as an exercise in stultification. The Vedas in their current form is said to be 12,000 years old. Mark Balfour in his work: 'The Sign of the Serpent' says: "In recent years, intense archaeological and anthropological work has revealed that the Vedic-Aryan civilization can be dated from available evidence to approximately 10,000 BC, around the time of the last glacial period. This author also makes it clear that the word Arya means 'civilized', 'noble' etc. In this connection I must place before you a few basic facts that should never be lost sight of by any student of Indian history. Dr. Ambedkhar had made a thorough and first-hand study of the Rg Veda and the Zend-Avesta. According to him, the Aryan Invasion Theory is a sheer myth. He said: "So far as the Rig Veda is concerned, there is not a particle of evidendce suggesting the invasion of India by the Aryans outside India ... So far as the testimony of the Vedic literature is concerned, it is against the theory that the original home of the Aryans was outside India."

He has given us a quartlet of unimpeachable findings. They are:

1. The Vedas do not know any such race as the Aryan race.
2. There is no evidence in the Vedas of any invasion of the Aryan race and its having conquered Dasas and Dasyus supposed to be the natives of India.
3. There is no evidence to show that the distinction between Aryans, Dasas and Dasyus was a racial distinction.
4. The Vedas do not support the contention that the Aryans were different in colour from the Dasas and Dasyus.

To take the thread.

The Vedas were orally transmitted.

They were recited musically. Modulations and adherence to appropriate time-units informed such chanting and recitation.

It is the live lips of the Achāryas that keep the Vedas alive.

The cold print communicates less than nothing.

All foreign Indologists never sat at the feet of an Ācharya. Their knowledge of the Vedas amounts to precious little.

The list of European orientalists is indeed imposing. Sir William James, Sir Charles Wilkins, Colonel Colin Mackenzie, H.T. Colebrooke, A.W. Schlegel, H.H. Wilson, Franz Bopp, Eugene Burnouf, Theodor Benfy, Sir Alexander Cunningham, Robert Caldwell, Sir Monica Monier-Williams, Theodore Goldstucker, Rudolf Roth, Max Muller, A.F. Weber, E.B. Cowell, W.D. Whitney, J.G. Buhler, Vincent Smith, H.G. Jacobi, Sir G.A. Grierson, F.E. Pargiter, A.A. Macdonnel, Mauris Bloomfield, Garbe, E.W. Hopkins, F.W. Thomas, Sir Mark Aurel Stein, Moris Winternitz, A.S. Keith, Turner, Wheeler and others.

Did these write on Xianity?

Thereby hangs a tale.

Can you imagine a westerner making a shameless effort to recite a passage from the Veda?

H.A. Popley, a Xian missionary, took pains to learn Tamil.

When he spoke Tamil, it sounded more like Swahili or Bantu than like any Indian language.

(ஒத்தலக்குண்டு மக்களே - ஏசுநதரை வரவைப்பதற்கான முஸ்தீபுகளை செய்ய வேணும் ...)

The Sangam literature says: சிறந்த வேதம் விளங்கப் பாடி...

If not so recited or chanted, it ceases to be Veda.

* Barring the Atharvana, the three other Vedas have to be rendered musically in such a manner that the import of the passage is made manifest. The rendering therefore follows a well-established pattern from time immemorial. It is this which can cause the recondite arcana get manifested. The recitation may appear easy and simple. Yes, it is easy and simple, for the accomplished practitioner whose art lies concealed in his art.

As the Brahmins cultivated the Vedas so punctiliously, Kundram Bhudanār apostrophised them thus:

நான்மறை விரித்து நல்லிசை விளக்கும்
வாய்மொழிப் புலவீர்! - Paripātal.9:12-13.

The accent is on the tune, its measure, its time: all these perfectly dovetailing with each other in exemplary excellence.

No wonder the Vedas were transmitted orally and by no other means. It is the chanting of the Vedas that is enchanting and at once spell-binding. The parakeets that heard the spell-binding chanting, in turn, became chanters par excellence.

வளை வாய்க்கிள்ளை மறை விளி பயிற்றும்
மறை காப்பாளர் உறை பதி ... Perumpānn:300-301.

It is parrots and parakeets, jays and popinjays that lived close to the houses of the Brahmins. These are out of bounds for bantam and dog (மனையுறை கோழியொடு நமலி துன்றாது ...).

No wonder such Brahmins were held in high esteem. They were poised in loftiness. They lived unflawed. It was the Vedas that exercised them.

வடுவில் கொள்கையின் உயர்ந்தோர் ஆய்ந்த
கெடுவில் கேள்வி . . . - Paripātal.2:25-26

The tools that unlock the secrets of the Vedas are the six Angas.

Vedic scholars were commanded to cultivate these Angas with meticulous care.

The Vedas are the most hoary opus. They constitute the Ancient One's Logos. They are to be mastered with the aid and assistance of the six Angas.

நன்று ஆய்ந்த நீள் நிமிர் சடை
முதுமுதல்வன் வாய் போகாது
ஒன்று புரிந்த ஈர் இரண்டின்
ஆறு உணர்ந்த ஒரு முது நூல் ... - புறம்.166:1-4

Since the Vedas are Siva's own opus, they can be learnt only through the grace of Siva.

The evolution of this idea meets with its perfect exposition in an invocatory hymn of the Tiruvilaiyātal Pūrānam.

கல்லாலின் புடை யமர்ந்து நான்மறை ஆறங்க முதல் கற்ற கேள்வி
வல்லார்கள் நால்வர்க்கும் வாக்கிறந்த பூரணமாய் மறைக்கு
அப்பாலாய்
எல்லாமாய் அல்லதுமாய் இருந்ததனை இருந்தபடி இருந்து காட்டிச்
சொல்லாமல் சொன்னவரை நினையாமல் நினைந்து பவத்
தொடக்கை வெல்வாம்.

Let us invoke Him who seated under the Banyan tree
Taught the competent Four all knowledge
Beginning with the four Vedas and the six Angas.
He is the ineffable Perfection who is beyond the
Vedas.
He is everything as well as its converse; He revealed
The Absolute as It is and as the Absolute.
He spake not but communicated.
Not thinking on aught else and solely thinking
On Him, let us vanquish recurring transmigration.

This indeed is that silence that surpasseth understanding and at the same time blesses the devout with true understanding.

The Vedas are known as Marai in Tamil. Yet the word Marai also connotes Vedāntam or Upanishad.

Paripātal 3:65-66 is as follows:

அறத்தினுள் அன்பு நீ; மறத்தினுள் மைந்து நீ;
வேதத்து மறை நீ; பூதத்து முதலும் நீ.

[You are Love that informs dharma;
prowess that constitutes valour;
the Upanishad of the Vedas;
the Author of the elements.]

It is the Vedas that prescribe the multitudinous *velvis* the performance of which ushers in universal weal and welfare. For this the fostering of the sacrificial fire was a must. Indeed, this practice prevailed in all the three Tamil countries. It is the Brahmins who tended the sacrificial fires with utmost care. Sacrifices were also conducted in the forests. Puranānūru, Patitrupatthu and Maduraikkānji bear testimony to the fact that the three crowned monarchs as also the rulers of small domains, like Atikamān and Pāri propagated the performance of sacrifices with the help of the Brahmins.

Ghee was profusely poured into the sacrificial pits to foster the flame. Verse 166 of the Puranānūru is in point. This deals with the genre called Pārppanar Vākai. The verse in question is by Āvūr Mūlangkizhār, sung in honour of Pūnjātrūr-p-Pārppān Kauniyan Vinnantāyan. Obviously Vinnantāyan belongs to the Kaundinya gotra. St. Tirugnānasambandhar belongs to this gotra. Out of curiosity, I was impelled to read St.Sambandhar's decad on Āvūr. St. Sambandhar describes himself as Kāzhikkauniyan.

The Puranānūru verse referred to above, stresses, inter alia, two points. 1. The ability of the learned Brahmins to convince the adherents of alien faiths of their folly and thus reclaim them back to their parent Vedic fold. 2. Twenty one types of Vedic sacrifices were in vogue in the dim distant path.

When St. Sambandhar, the Kauniya, vanquished the Buddhist-disputant, St. Sekkizhār's observes: "அவனுக்கு ஏற்கு மாறு அருளிச் செய்(தார்) ..." Referring to the vanquishing of St.Sambandhar, St. Sekkizhār calls him Kauniyar Kone (the Prince of Kauniyar).

The 21 Vedic sacrifices are: (1) the seven types of Soma Yagna, (2) the seven types of Havis yagna and (3) the seven types of Bhāga yagna.

The seven types of Sama Yagna are

(i) Agnishtomam, (2) Ati Agnishtomam, (3) Uktiyam, (4) Shodasi, (5) Vājapeyam, (6) Atirātram and (7) Apotoryāmam.

The seven types of Havis Yagnam are (1) Agniyādeyam, (2) Agnihotram, (3) Darsapūrnamāsam, (4) Chāturmāsyam, (5) Nirūtapasubhandam, (6) Āgrayanam and (7) Soutthirāmani.

The seven Bhagayagnas are (1) Ashtakai, (2) Āpārvanam, (3) Srāttam, (4) Srāvani, (5) Āgrakāyani, (6) Chaitri and (7) Āsvayuji.

It is heartening to note that many of these yagnas are performed even to-day.

The conductor of a *velvi* is called Velvi Āsān. He guides the performer who is called yajamān whose wife participates in the *velvi*.

For fostering the sacrificial fire, ghee is obtained from cows which are of 14 kinds. These flourish in villages as well as forests. This ghee is liberally poured into the homa-pit as though it is freely available like water.

All Vedic sacrifices are conducted in strict accordance with the rules prescribed. Every Brahmin worth his name is a word-perfect ritualist. His total adherence to the rituals marks his greatness. The Tiru Muruku Ātruppatai calls him: "மந்திர விதியின் மரபுளி வழாஅ அந்தணர்."

As Perumcheral Irumporai and his wife caused the performance of a yaga in strict conformity with the rules, they came to be blessed with a son of surpassing nobility and loftiness.

Not all men seek after the eternal. The ephemeral too has its charm. Maduraikkānji speaks of yagas the performance of which enables the performer to gain paradise. It is the wise whose goal is the *moksha*. The not-so-wise naturally covet paradise which is but a superior Bordello. A true Saivite seeks Kailas and a true Vaishnavite Vaikuntam. The Paripātal says that the true Vedic sacrifice is indeed the form of Vishnu. Commenting on this Dr. U.Ve. Swaminatha Iyer says: "You (Vishnu) sport the flag which bears the signum of Garuda. The utterance of the *Velvi Āsān* is your (verbal) form. The sacrificial pillar too is of your form. You thrive on the homa-denu, the cow offered in the homa. The Brahmins duly light the Vedic fire, fan it ablaze and in that fire they behold your manifestation. Even they that deny the existence of God, witnessing this, affirm His reality."

Incidentally, this comment of Iyer's brings to our notice that atheism flourished in the past also. The idea of atheism in India is different from the one which prevails elsewhere. If one accepts God and yet denies the Vedas, that one is an atheist. If, on the other hand, he who denies Godhead and yet accepts the Vedas, is a theist. The followers of the Pūrva Mimāmsa school are therefore theists. The Buddhists and the Samanas are absolute atheists.

Lord Muruka was especially dear to the Sankam Tamils. He is the God of the two languages, namely Tamil and Sanskrit. He is the fosterer of the Tamil and Sanskrit culture. He is Subrahmanyan — the guardian of Brahminism. He is Muruka — the Consort of Valli, a Kuratthi, a native of the forest. He is 1a great integrator and a guardian of multiple culture. Of his six visages, Nakkirar says:

"One face diffuses countless rays of light
Removing from the world its darkness dense.
Another face, because its devotees
Do proclaim him, casts on them a gracious look
And grants the boon for which they pray
with love
And joy. A third is on the watch to guard
The sacrifices the Brahmin priests perform
Who never swerve from practising the rites
The Vedas four ordain."

Tirupparangkundram is dear to Muruka. This holy polis is ever engaged in fostering Vedic sacrifices. The Paripātal says:

"The smoke of eaglewood and of oblations
Soars up and up to the Swarga Loka.
It invades the unwinking eyes of the devas
Who are forced to close their eyes to shut out
The smoke ..." 17: 28-32

It is said that the smoke that emerges from the sacrificial fire actually strengthens the ozone. This smoke is holy. Not so the one that is let out by shells and bombs and the like. Our forefathers did well to promote *velvis.*

A Pāndyan called Palyāgasālai Muthukudumi was a tireless performer of the Vedic sacrifices. Of him Maduraikkānji says:

"Thou art as that great Pāndyan king
Named Muthukudumi who earned high praise
Performing many sacrificial rites,
And who acquired high truths from sages great
Well-versed in ancient lore."

Velvi is associated with a pit and a pillar. The pit is the sacrificial pit and the pillar is the *yupa*. Palyāga Sālai Muthukudumi erected yupas galore and of this verse 15 of the Puranānūru speaks eloquently.

Seignalūr is the town where Chandisa Nāyanār was born. The word 'Cei' refers to Muruka who, of yore, made his camp here. It was one of the five places where the Chola monarchs were coronated. In this town, Vedic culture reigned supreme. Of this town St. Sekkizhār says:

"The town is rich in yupa columns on which could
Abide the carriers of spreading wings
Of Vishnu and Brahma who came thither to receive
The *havis* due to them offered by the Brahmins
In the halls of sacrifice; onto a yupa column
Could be fastened the mount of Indra."

Verse 15 of the Puranānūru sings of the splendour of the area covered with yupas thus: "யூபம் நட்ட வியன் களம் பல கொல்!"

Ancient monarchs, who, as true Kshatriyās,
fostered Vedic sacrifices,
always sought the company of Vedic munis.

A famous Pāndyan called "தலையாலங்கானத்துச் செருவென்ற பாண்டியன்" was always a great lover of the Vedic munis. He was obeyed by the princes of the realm. He was ever ready to associate himself with the performers of Vedic sacrifices.

> Like this Pandya, Karikāla and Killivalava were renowned for their upholding the Vedic dharma and culture.

பெருநற்கிள்ளி was a Chola of the Cholas. He performed the great Rajasuya yaga.

We will now refer to the Chera kings. பதிற்றுப்பத்து extols பல்யானைச் செல்கெழுகுட்டுவன், செல்வக் கடுங்கோ வாழியாதான் and பெருஞ்சேரல் இரும்பொறை – as the great fosterers of the Vedic sacrifices.

Verse 13 of the Akanānūru speaks of the Vedic sacrifice of தென்னவன் மறவன் பண்ணி. This indeed is a rare reference.

Brahmins, Kshatriyas and merchants constitute the twice-born clan. Brahmins and monarchs liberally supported the Vedic sacrifices. The merchants, it should be added, did not lag behind. Lines 200-204 of the Pattinappālai are in point. The message is as follows:

> "The merchants ...
> discharge their duties to the gods,
> offer *havis*, tend with care sturdy bulls and
> cows and propagate the renown of the
> Brahmins
> well-versed in the four Vedas."

Vedic sacrifices are rendered for the welfare of all entia. No wonder they received support from non-human beings also. A vignette from the Perumpānātruppadai is in point.

"Lo, he is the lord of the hills.
Here rishis ever tend the fire ablaze
With firewood secured by the white-trunked
tuskers."

The sacrificial fire-pit is a world by itself. It is endowed with the valiancy to create, foster and absorb too. According to the Maha Bhārata, Draupadi emerged out of the yagna. The Velirs of Tamil Nādu were a great race. Their prepositus, according to verse 201 of Puranānūru, emerged from the sacrificial fire thus:

"Among the generous clans of the Velirs
You are the greatest of the fortynine
generations...
Who ruled Thuvarai the city that appeared
In the sacrificial pit of a northern sage."

Well, Vedam is Velvi and vice-versa. When one of them is hailed, it is tantamount to the hailing of the other also. There exists between the two an ineluctable sodality. Verse 220 of the Akanānūru makes a stunning comparison. The splendorous pulchritude of the heroine is compared to the cunningly-crafted yupa pillar by Parasurāma. If such comparisons are met with in Sankam classics, what indeed can be the inevitable and illative inference? It is only this. Sankam Literature is the precious life-blood of the Veda which is embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.

The performers of the Vedic sacrifices enjoyed universal admiration. They were men of unimpeachable character. Their very appearance commanded respect. Boundless indeed was their learning. They led a frugal and austere life. They were men of *tapas*. They formed the holy company whose eye could pierce 'The present, and the past, and the to-come,' who attained the science of sacred things by

> 'Dreadful abstinence
> And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,
> Deep contemplation, and unwearied study,
> In years outstretched beyond the date of man."

They followed a strict regimen. As Bharati remarked "ஒன்றுமே வேண்டாது உலகனைத்தும் ஆள்வர் காண்!"

During the Sankam time, a Brahmin lived the life of a celibute for fortyeight years. He then entered his married life and lived an exemplary life. The couple lived in a cottage coated with cow-dung. It tended milch-cows. Cocks and hens as also dogs and bitches would never pollute their dwelling place. However parakeets and parrots as also jays and popinjays lived close to them. These recited the Vedas along with the chelas of the Vedas.

The Vedic Brahmins ate sparingly. Rajahamsam was the special rice that was earmarked for them. Pepper and curry-leaf spiced their victuals. Salted mangoes – tender and small –, were their delicacy. The cow supplied their wants which were a few only.

These were compassionate men who lived for the welfare of the world.

The invocatory verse of the Kalittokai is significant. The verse is as follows:

ஆறு அறி அந்தணர்க்கு அருமறை பல பகர்ந்து
தேறு நீர் சடைக்கரந்து, திரிபுரம் தீ மருத்து,
கூறாமல் குறித்ததன் மேல் செல்லும் கடுங்கூளி
மாறாப் போர், மணி மிடற்று, எண் கையாய்! கேள், இனி:

படுபறை பல இயம்ப, பல் உருவம் பெயர்த்து நீ
கொடு கொட்டி ஆடுங்கால், தோடு உயர் அகல் அல்குல்,

தொடி புரை நுசுப்பினாள் கொண்ட சீர் தருவாளோ?

மண்டு அமர்பல கடந்து, மதுகையால் நீறு அணிந்து,
பண்டரங்கம் ஆடுங்கால் பணை எழில்அணை மென் தோள்
வண்டு அரற்றும் கூந்தலாள் வளர்தூக்குத் தருவாளோ?

தொலை உழுவைத் தோல் அசைஇ, கொன்றைத்தார் சுவற் புரள
தலை அங்கை கொண்டு, நீ காபாலம் ஆடுங்கால்
முலை அணிந்த முறுவலாள் முன் பாணி தருவாளோ?
        என ஆங்கு
பாணியும், தூக்கும், சீரும், என்று இவை
மாண் இழை அரிவை காப்ப,
ஆணம் இல் பொருள் எமக்கு அமர்ந்தனை, ஆடி.

This verse is significant as it records a good many truths pertaining to the Vedas and their culture.

1. Lord Siva is hailed as the Author of the Vedas.
2. It is He who taught the Vedas to the Brahmins.
3. He taught them many Vedas (அருமறை பல பகர்ந்து) ... [Anantā Vai Veda: During Kali we have but four.]

   Vibhishana appealed to Ravanā's greatness

   when, he addressed Ravana and said: "ஐய நீ

   ஆயிரம் வேதம் அறிகுவை ..."
4. These Vedas were taught to the Brahmins who were well versed in the Way.
5. Vedic reading was vouchsafed only to the competent.
6. Siva's matted hair conceals the Ganga.
7. Siva smote the three skyey citadels.
8. Siva's greatness surpasses narration.

9. Siva's throat is dark with the venom of Ālakāla.
10. Siva sports eight hands.
11. His forms are numberless (பல் உருவம்).
12. He enacts the dance of Kotukotti.
13. For this time is kept by His Consort.
14. Siva has overwhelmed many foes, securing success in all wars.
15. He wears the holy ash in joy.
16. He enacts the dance of Pandarangam.
17. For this, time is kept by His Consort.
18. Siva is girt with the skin of a murderous tiger.
19. He wears a garland of Kondrai flowers.
20. It is He who enacts the dance of Kotukotti.
21. For this too, His Consort keeps time.

In this dance the male half of the androgynic form performs the dance; the female half remains static, yes, absolutely static.

Siva's anklets jingle;
The drum in His palm resounds;
His ruddy eye flashes a myriad gestures;
His hirsutorufous matted hair, adangle
covers all the eight cardinal points ...

Well, our Siva can enact such a dance. And for this very reason He is hailed as the supreme Lord-God.

The Rg Veda (Second Mandala, 36th Sutra, second mantra) hails Siva as the supreme God and calls Him Thāndavesuvara Mūrti alias Bharata.

Bharata means Dancer.

The Periya Purānam but affirms the Rg Vedic dictum when it sings thus:

ஊன் அடைந்த உடம்பின் பிறவியே

தான் அடைந்த உறுதியைச் சாருமால்

தேன் அடைந்த மலர்ப்பொழில் தில்லையுள்

மாநடம் செய வரதர் பொற்றாள் தொழ.

[Life abiding in the tabernacle of flesh
Can sure attain its goal, the end of embodiment,
If it adores the golden feet of the Dancer
Who enacts the dance – great and grand –,
In Tillai dight with melliferous gardens].

4. National Integration through Literature

31.7.95: Madras

May the Dancer at Tillai us protect!

I am afraid that I will have to first tender an apology before I plunge in medias res, as my paper will expose a few facts which are likely to shock and knock the wits of at least a modicum of the audience, here present. I am bound, however, to tell you that I am not playing the mere role of a debunker.

Peradventure, many of us have developed an inward deafness since 15th August 1947. This deafness is ineluctably linked with a blindness which is dead to the existence of a catena of bitter facts over which are hung curtain after curtain wrought of steel and bronze as well as stone and adamant.

History informs us that as many as 56 sovereign and independent countries throve within the geographical boundaires of India that is Bharat. The Vindya range running east to west well-nigh served as a barricade effecting a physical division of a permanent kind. Eighteen were the main languages articulated by the peoples of Bharat. All these tongues were regional, absolutely regional. The one and only language, namely Sanskrit, in its spoken form of Prakrit and which was not one of the eighteen languages, served as the lingua franca of Bharat. This was the only language which was at all concerned with the integration of Bharat as a nation. This indeed is the message of Indian history. Bharati, through his Āttichoodi, appeal to us thus: சரித்திரத் தேர்ச்சி கொள் (gain proficiency in history).

It is not as if the sovereigns of Tamil Nadu were unalive to the greatness of integration. The great Raja Raja brought under his control almost the entire Tamil Nadu. Yet he knew that political integration would not last long. He knew the value of religion as a welding force. It is through the Big Temple which he constructed on purpose, that he essayed to bring about the much-needed integration. Not one cent of land in and around Thanjavur was however endowed for the maintenance of the Big Temple. Yet we know that his endowments were liberal in the true sense of the word. Parcels of land situate in Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra and Sri Lanka formed part of his endowments.

Pained beyond measure by the vandalism repeatedly perpetrated by Gazni Mohammed, Rajendra Chola proceeded towards north with an invincible army, the moment he came by an inkling of the massive invasion. As ill-luck would have it, his army and Gazni Mohammed's army moved on parallel roads, a distance of twenty miles separating them. Parallel lines never meet.

Well, History informs us that a great Chola even went to the extent of fortifying the northern frontier of Bharat by closing a weak pass in the Himalayas and opening a new and well-guarded pass. St.Sekkizhār says:

> பொன்மலைப் புலி நின்றோங்கப் புதுமலை இடித்துப் போற்றும்
> அந்நெறி வழியேயாக அயல்வழி அடைத்த சோழன் ...

The great research scholar M. Raghava Iyengar says that this passage is referred to as the Chola Pass by the Tibetans. Much information on this point can be gathered from Vol.X of Imperial Gazeteer of India and also from Vol.V of Encyclopaedia Britannica. In this connexion, I must observe that the article of Kudavāyil Balasubramanian, is to be reckoned as a breakthrough.

So our sovereigns have ever held Bharat to be a single nation. However regional demands prevailed over national outlook. Even St. Tirugnāna Sambandhar who made his avatar to integrate Bharat through the faith of Saivism, did not cross the limits of the Kālatthi Hills. Standing there he adored the northern shrines and hailed them in dulcet decades of sheer bhakti. It is thus portrayed by St. Sekkizhār — my deity.

அங்கண் வடதிசை மேலும் குடக்கின் மேலும்
அருந்தமிழின் வழக்கங்கு நிகழாதாகத்
திங்கள் புனைமுடியார் தந்தானந் தோறும் சென்று
தமிழ் இசை பாடுஞ் செய்கை போல
மங்கையுடன் வானவர்கள் போற்றிசைப்ப
வீற்றிருந்தார் வடகயிலை வணங்கிப் பாடிச்
செங்கமலமலர் வாவித் திருக்கேதாரம் தொழுது
திருப்பதிக இசை திருந்தப் பாடி ...

It can thus be seen that regional needs claimed priority. This is but natural. I have to first think of my family, then of others. Philosophical equations are no substitutes for stubborn and relentless physical needs.

Well, when a region is common to more rulers than one, aggression begins to have its day. Kulottungka III waged a war against the Pandya, set fire to Madurai, destroyed the King's palace, ploughed the site with ploughs yoked to donkeys and sowed the waste with வரகு. Such was the acerbity of a Tamil King towards another Tamil King. Homo homini lupus: man to man is wolf. Madurai slowly emerged from such shame and disaster and grew into a great power during the reign of Māra Varma Sundara Pandyan. He invaded the Chola country and set fire to the Chola capitals, Thanjavur and Uraiyūr (தஞ்சையும் உறந்தையும் செந்தழல் கொளுத்தி ...). The Chola palace at Thanjavur was razed to the ground. Donkeys ploughed the site and வரகு was sown on the site where once the magnificent palace stood. The Pāndya also saw to it that no pillar of any building stood. பறியாத தூண் இல்லை. However he spared a millennium-old sixteen-pillared mandapam, gifted by கரிகால் பெருவளத்தான் to the poet who indited the பட்டினத்துப்பாலை. A Tamilian may oppose a Tamilian, but no Tamilian opposes Tamil.

From these facts of History, we get at the truth of the political maxim which says: "The man on the border is your enemy." When the Tamil Kings fought with each other like Kilkenny cats, you can't expect the Tamil poet to sing the glories of integration. He but sang songs of war and heroism. Yet, Tamil Literature also speaks eloquently, though occasionally, about the rapprochements effected by poets between rival kings.

To take the thread. When regional languages are of no avail, it is the national that should achieve the task. So it is we find that Sanskrit comes to the fore and does the work of integration. Indeed Sanskrit unified Bharat through its literature – a term which I employ to cover the Sruti, the Smriti, the Itihāsa, the Purana etc. In particular the Itihāsas played a vital role. Valmiki's Ramayana, you should know, is in size, the Illiad plus the Odyssey into two. The Maha Bharata is four times the size of the Ramayana. No wonder R.T.H. Griffith – the translator of the Valmiki Ramayana stood dazed before the Maha Bharata. He said: "I bow before this colossal epic."

Rama was born in Ayodhya. Krishna ruled over Dwaraka. But look at the countless shrines of Rama and Krishna in South India. Kamban makes us feel that Rama is a Tamilian par excellence. Of him he said: "தென் சொல் கடந்து வட சொற்கு எல்லை தேர்ந்தான்." Look at Sri Krishna, the Krishna of Āndāl Nācchiyār. He is a native of Srivilliputthoor. No doubt he is the Māyan of North

Matura, the Lord of Govardhan, the வண்துவராப் பதி. At the same time he is one of Guruvaayoor, of Uduppi and also of the many South Indian cities. I see Krishna as Kannan—the local neatherd lording over கன்றுகாலி in our pasture land.

We know that the sacred abode of Lord Siva is Sri Kailash. However he chose to enact all His 64 lilas in Madurai – the Pandyan capital. All His Nayanmar – barring perhaps Tirumoolar –, are natives of S. India in general and Tamil Nadu, in particular.

Look at the achievement of Sankara Bhagawat Pāda—the Tamilian. He was a native of the Chera country. And the Chera country of the 9th c., was a Tamil country. By his grand exposition of advaita in Sanskrit, he brought about the integration of Bharat.

Religion in the true sense of the word is a unifying force. A religious war is a contradiction in terms. A disturbance caused in the name of religion is irreligious.

Take a look at temple-worship. When you hear in the temple of Kāsi Viswanatha the self-same Vedic mantras that are chanted in the Kapaleeswara temple at Mylapore, you will be thrilled to the very cockles of your heart. Let us learn to respect the Sanskrit mantras; they are integrative in character and therefore a blessing. We should ever make a wholesome use of languages; we should never abuse them.

I have not come here to champion the cause of Sanskrit. Neither am I competent to do it. My mother tongue is Tamil and to me none is dearer than mine own mother. Yet I am alive to the fact that there are mothers who are as graceful, as generous, as tender and as beautiful as one's own mother. As the language of our motherland, Sanskrit has substantially contributed to our harmony and well-being. It has ever found a hospitable home in every part of India. Hon'ble Tambi, the Vice-Chancellor of the Kerala University drew my attention to a great discovery. Pundits of Kashmir desired to bring in print a rare work of Abiṇava Gupta. They had with them a moth-eaten cadjan manuscript. They wanted to come by, at least, one more manuscript, for purposes of comparison. A wide search was undertaken throughout the length and breadth of Bharat. When after a long time spent in painstaking quest, they decided to punctuate a full stop to their endeavour, out popped the much-coveted enchiridion from an interior village of Kerala. With one more anecdote I will pass this phase. Vishnu Gupta known as Chanakya and also Kautilya was a Brahmin from Conjeepuram. He settled in the North and truly brought about a change in the history of India. His Artha Sastra served as the Vade-mecum of every Indian prince. Owing to the efflux of time and unexpected vicissitudes, his work became a rarity. Only portions of it were available. The work in its complete form literally went into hiding. A long and vigorous search only proved to be a painful exercise in futility. When scholars decided to bring out an incomplete edition of the work, they were overjoyed to hear of the glad tidings that a well-kept manuscript was available in the Agraharam of Tiruvidaimaruthoor. Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar once remarked: "Look here, T.N.R. India is such a vast country that truth somehow finds a place or two to hide itself."

Let us manumit truth. Let it walk abroad in its nascent splendour. Let the words of the Sanskrit sankalpa ring through our nation.

அத்ய ப்ரஹ்மண :
த்விதீயே பரார்தே
வைவஸ்த மந்வந்த்ரே
அஷ்டா விம்சதி தமே
கலி யுகே
ப்ரதமே பாதே
ஜம்புத்வீபே
பாரத வர்ஷே
பரத கண்டே
மேரோ :
தக்ஷிணோ பார்ஸ்வே ...

The continent of Bharat that is situate south of Meru which is the Himalayas: This is India that is Bharat. It is this which we should hail in hymn and song and solemn strain.

Before I conclude I should say that it should be said to the credit of the British that it was thanks to them, India achieved national integration, politically. They brought about the integration, alio intuitu (with ulterior motive). Yet it was they that did it. However when their oppression became unbearable, right thinking men could no longer feel happy about the pseudo-integration. They ached for the real and the brummegem could no longer hold any charm for them. They wanted all the citizens of India to rise up as a nation ignoring all divisive factors to annihilate the thraldom that kept them bound in adamentine chains. Poets of India – rishi-like in nature and stature –, were out to weld the nation, with the help of the opportunely-invoked spirit of harmony, into one unified whole – magnificent to behold.

It was at this time Bharati – truly the Bard of Bharat–, discovered to his dismay, that he could not lay hold on any work in Tamil which dealt with India as a nation. He thought that there might be some who knew of the existence of the work or works which he desired to cultivate in depth. The Swadesamitran dated 13 Feb. 1906 published the bard's appeal couched in these words: "பண்டைத் தமிழ் நூல்களில் பாரத நாடு முழுதினையும் ஒருங்கே புகழ்ந்து கூறப்பட்டிருக்கும் பாடல்களை அறிஞர்கள் தெரிந்து அனுப்புவார்களாயின் அவர் மாட்டு மிக்கக் கடப்பாடு உடையவன் ஆவேன்." Inly aware of the non-existence of such literature he added the following words to his appeal." "தற்காலத்தே தமிழ்ப் புலமையிற் சான்று விளங்கும் தமிழ்ப் பெருமக்கள் புதியனவாக தேச பக்திப் பாக்கள் புனைந்து அனுப்புவாராயின் அவையும் நன்றியுடன் ஏற்றுக் கொள்ளப்படும்."

His appeal re-appeared on 28 Feb. 1906. It should be said in this context that his appeal evoked no appreciable response. So Bharati resolved to flex his creative muscle in this noble task. During the course of 14 months or so, 14 verses whose words were afire with an intense desire for liberation through integration, were indited by the poet and these eventually appeared as a booklet entitled 'Swadesa Gitangkal' in the beginning of 1908. By 1909 Bharati happened on a Sanskrit apothegm which practically became his motto.

ஜநநி ஜந்ம பூமிச்ச
ஸ்வர்காதபி கரீயஸீ.

He rendered this into Tamil thus:

பெற்ற தாயும் பிறந்த பொன்னாடும்
நற்றவ வானினும் நனி சிறந்தனவே.

In those days India was rich in fiery apostles of patriotism and many among them were poets. Bankin Chandra Chatterjee, Sir Md. Iqbal, Sri Aurobindo, Tagore and Sarojini Naidu were known the world over as authentic poets.

Bankin Chandra gave us the *taraka mantra*: 'Vande Mātaram'. This phrase is enshrined in his famous poem which opens with these two enchanting and vivifying vocables. He composed this verse in a rare moment of highest inspiration. According to Sri Aurobindo, Bankin Chandra was a divine rishi. To Bankim, Bengal was the divine mother.

To Prof. Sundaram Pillai Tamil was the divine mother. In time, India came to be conceived as the Magna Mater. This concept speeded up the process of integration.

It should however be observed in this context that the song opening with the words 'Vande Mataram' went unnoticed for over two decades. During this time, it appeared as though that the song was performing a sort of tapas in icy seclusion. It eventually emerged, according to Ronaldshay, as a parable of patriotism. The verse has, for sure, received the God-touch.

In 1937, the Indian National Congress passed a resolution thanks to which the Vande Mātaram song was adopted as the national anthem of Bharat. The song gained a sedate and solemn currency throughout India. As Moni Bagghee remarked 'the traditional religious worship of Mother Durga merged with the patriotic adoration of the country, and so Durga and Bharati fused into Bhavani – the holder of multitudinous strength: bahubala dhārani'.

The two vocables 'Vande' and 'Mātaram' – soft like silk, yet taut with power infinite –, carried their vibration and reverberation to the ends of British India and to their very colonies. The staunch and unbending Britisher quaked from top to toe when he heard the loud chanting of this mantra. Tagore hailed it as the national mantra. It was therefore anathema maranatha for the Britisher. It was banned. The ban but served to evoke its glory with re-doubled force. In fine, the history of this song is as follows. Bankim Chandra, the Maha-Rishi, composed it; Tagore, the Maha Kavi, set it to music; Sri Aurobindo, the Maha Yogi, explicated it and Bharati the Bard of Bharat dinned it sweetly into the ears of the Tamils.

Those were days when freedom through integration was the theme that informed the writings of such great Indians as Swami Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra, Sir Md. Iqbal, Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Dwejendra Lal Roy, Sarojini Naidu, Harindranath, Virendranath, Saraladevi Chaudhurani, Derozio, Indira Devi, Dilip Kumar Roy, Kazi Nazrul Islam, R.V. Pandit, Shriman Pathak, Sol. D. Royeppan, Keshab Chandra Sen, M.R. Sharman, N.V. Tilak, Vallatthol Narayana Menon, Adeodato Baretto, Payūr Bharadwaja, Manohar Saradessai, Subramania Bharati and Rashtrakavi Kuvempu.

Well, where do we stand to-day? The less said the better. The Tamil adage says: "வேலியே பயிரை மேய்கிறது." Yes. Our government, wittingly or unwittingly, had laid the axe at the root of the tree of integration. The joint-family system and the tarward system which served as the foundation of integration had been done away with. The Act relating to the Ceiling on Land-holding had shattered into smithereens that which was fostered over the centuries. In this context the only analogy that comes to my mind is an episode recorded by J.R.R. Tolkien in his famous book The Lord of The Rings. Surveillance was kept over one Gollum who was half-beast and half-man, an amphibian and a tree-climber. Two orcs (semi-monsters) were entrusted with the job of shadowing him. But the gobbler with the flapping hands gave them the slip. At that very hour came the command to apprehend him. One of the spies then remarked: "No sooner had he slipped us and run off than word came he's wanted alive, wanted quick."

Then the other spy remarked: "Garn! (Go on.) First you shoot wild, then you run too slow."

Our plight is not unsimilar to this plight. We have mortally wounded INTEGRATION; now we are slowly moving about to secure healing herbs.

In sorrow we must go, but not in despair. For, Integration divinely bestowed is meant to be solid and whole. It will survive, not thanks to us, but in spite of us. Thank you. I have done.

5. The Tirukkalitruppatiyār

Saiva Siddhanta is the Saivism of Tamil Nādu. The Sanskrit Vedas as interpreted by the Saiva Āgamas and the Dravida Vedas namely the Tevāram and other Saivite Tirumurais are its foundation. The tenth Tirumurai which is the Tirumantiram has in a general way systematized the Saiva Siddhanta. Its essence is contained in the fourteen Tamil Sastras called the Meykanta Sastras. The crest-jewel of these opuses is the Sivagnāna Bhotam, a magnificent work by St. Meykantār.

After the advent of the twelve Saivite Tirumurai-s came into existence the fourteen Meykanta Sastras. The twelfth Tirumurai by St.Sekkizhār is known as the Periya Puranam. It is appositely hailed as 'Applied Saiva Siddhanta'.

The first of the Saiva Siddhanta works is the Tiruvuntiyār (A.D. 1147). It is the work indited by Uyyavanta Deva Nāyanār of Tiruviyalūr. His chela was Āludaiya Deva. He learnt the Tiruvuntiyār from him. Āludaiya Deva Nāyanār taught this opus to his chela Uyyavanta Deva Nāyanār of Tirukkadavūr. The latter wrote a commentary on the Tiruvuntiyār which goes by the name Tirukkalitruppatiyār.

Though these works were indited earlier, they were included in the Meykanta Sastras for the significant reason that their authors – the precursors –, were well versed in the Saiva Āgamas as well as the Saivite Tirumurai-s.

The Tiruvuntiyār comprises forty five verses and each one is a tristich. The verses are cast in the metre Kalitthāzhisai. The Tirukkalitruppatiyār is a century of verses, in Venpa metre. But for the commentary – the Tirukkalitruppatiyār –, it is not possible to unlock the arcane Sastraic import embodied and treasured up in the Tiruvuntiyār. These two works are to be cultivated in juxtaposition. These two works, in the main, deal with Siva-Yoga.

The verse commentary opens thus:

அம்மையப்ப ரேயுலகுக் கம்மையப்ப ரென்றறிக
அம்மையப்ப ரப்பரிசே வந்தளிப்பர் - அம்மையப்பர்
எல்லா வுலகுக்கும் அப்புறத்தார் இப்புறத்தும்
அல்லார்போல் நிற்பர் அவர்.

My translation of this verse is as follows.

Know it is Ammai-Appar who is the Mother cum Father
Of the universe; it is Ammai-Appar who blesses
The soul with salvation; Ammai-Appar is beyond
All the worlds; yet does Ammai-Appar abide
This side of the universe too, standing unaffected.

Siva is both Mother and Father. His is the androgynic form. That indeed is the true faith which is alive to the maternal aspect of God. According to John Milton, God is at once masculine and feminine.

Magna Mater, Grace, Mercy, Sakti and Consort: These are the names of Uma who is inseparable from Siva.

The faith that disputes or denies the maternal element in God tends to grow more and more merciless.

Siva has a form; He is also formless; He has a formless form too. He is the Dancer of Ambalam. Ambalam is the human soul.

In His formlessness, He is pure Gnosis. Siva appears on earth in the form of a guru to claim the evolved soul. Guru in Saivism is Siva-Guruṇ. Guru is an incarnation of Grace.

It is Siva, the Guru par excellence, that blessed the world with the Saivāgamas. It is in the light of the Āgamas, the Vedas are to be interpreted and understood.

The recipients of Grace travel on life's common way in cheerful Godliness. Divinizing clarity is a gift from Grace. Metaphysicians and quodlibetariants usher in tohu bohu. All are born with eyes. However vision is a gift from Grace.

Godhead is TAT that is Sat-Cit-Ānanda. It is Consciousness-Gnosis-Bliss.

God is all, but all is not God.

A Greek philosopher posed a triad of questions. They are:

(1) What is God?

(2) What is not God?

(3) What is in between?

Saiva Siddhantam supplies the correct answers to these questions.

What is God? The answer is Pati.

What is not God? The answer is Pasu (soul).

What is in between? The answer is Pāsam (the fettering rope).

Pāsam comprises three malās they being Ānava, Kanma and Maya malas. These have to be done away with by the grace of Grace.

The goal of the soul is Siva. The mala-ridden soul should rid of its malas. Then it gets suffused with the Grace of Siva. Verse 11 of the Tirukkalitruppatiyār says:

> "The river-water that flows into the billowy sea
>
> Loses its nature and becomes sea's own water;
>
> Even so, when soul merges with Siva, its knowledge
>
> Becomes Siva-consciousness; when it flows out,
>
> It streams as Grace and does away with the malās."

They were the Nāyanmār who were endowed with Siva-Karanās and not with bodily karanās / instruments. The Four Apostles of Siva, namely Tirugnānasambandhar, Tirunāvukkarasar, Nampi Ārūrar and Mānickavāchakar performed mirific deeds which is mirabile dictu. They were animated and activised by Siva.

> Verse 13 avers: "... when souls are poised
> In Siva's Grace and are thus ruled by Him
> Their knowledge and deeds will become gradually Siva's own."

When can one behold Siva? Verse 15 says:

> "If by pure Siva-dharma, pure Siva-yoga and by
>
> Pure Siva-consciousness, I-hood is annulled and whoever
>
> Through such pursuit and practice loves Siva, then He
>
> Who is unbeholdable by any, will thither manifest."

The supreme paths are indicated in this verse. I-hood is I-ness and My-ness.

Deeds are classified into mild deeds and wild deeds. Both the types are informed by deep devotion. Mild deeds appear to be simple. However, we should remember, appearances are deceptive. Wild deeds appear to be impossible of achievement. However there are successful practitioners of wild deeds. Both mild and wild deeds are constitutive of Siva-dharma. Wild deeds intimidate. Only a rare few can take to them. Mild deeds too can be performed only by such devotees whose adherence to their chosen course does not brook any deviation at all.

It is flowers, water, milk, incense and the like which are required for Siva-puja. Devotees must first perform pancha-suddhi (preparatory purificatory rites, five in number) with care and devotion. Devotees who are sincere practitioners of charya and kriya are eligible for the performance of mild deeds. They should be free from pancha-mā-pātakam (murder, larceny, liquor, lust and falsity). Their thought, word and deed should ever remain untainted. They must be poised in sincerity, integrity and rectitude. It is only those who pursue the Vedic way in the light of the Sivāgamas that qualify themselves for the enactment of mild deeds.

Verses 18, 19 and 20 supply illustrations for the performance of wild deeds. Verse 18 says:

"Unto the ruddy-hued Bhairava that confers boons,

They, that day, killed with their hands, their boy

And cooked him; it is such merciless, murderous

And fierce deeds that are reckoned as wild deeds."

Sirutthondar and his wife did the killing and cooking of their boy to provide victuals for Siva-Bhairava. Jehovah relented when Abraham was about to kill his son Issac. He was pleased with a substituted offering which He Himself caused to manifest. Again, Abraham's wife, the mother of Issac, had no role to play. The tests to which Sirutthondar and his wife were put, are unexampled. They obeyed Bhairava punctiliously. It is strict obedience that counts. Adam and Eve lost their paradise for their disobedience.

The very name Siva means auspicious. The son of Sirutthondar was resurrected by the grace of Siva. The entire family including its servant-maid was translated to Siva-loka to abide there in sempiternal bliss.

Verse 19 is as follows:

"Lo and behold! He did not view it as sinful

Or blameworthy; he axed away the feet twain

Of (his own) father; for this, Siva conferred

On Chandesa the guerdon, which is

the beatitude of Sonship."

Chandesa, a Brahmachāri, hardly ten years old, was performing Siva-puja. When his father kicked the pot of milk kept for the sacred ablution, the boy picked a stick that was close to him and it turned out to be an axe. With that he chopped off the feet of his father. For this wild deed, attesting to the devotion of Chandesa, Siva made him His own son.

Arivāttāyar, an ardent devotee of Siva, served Siva by daily providing Him with neyvedya in the form of rice, greens and tender mangoes. Even when chill penury assailed him, he continued his service. One day when he was proceeding to the temple, by reason of his fatigue, his foot slipped and the articles of neyvedya fell into a fissure. The devotee stood undone. He thought thus: "Why should I live any more when I have failed in my duty?" Thinking thus, he began to set his sickle on his neck and saw away his neck from behind, through bone, cord and pipe. He was like the one who would cut away transmigration. Then sprouted a hand of Siva's from the fissure. The sound of 'Videl Videl' biting and eating the tender mangoes was heard. Siva's hand held the sawing hand of the devotee whose was instantaneously healed. It is to this wild deed of this servitor, verse 20 refers.

This wild deed is again referred to in verse 50 which also celebrates the fierce deeds of Tirukkurripputthondar, Yeyarkone Kalikkāmar, Mūrtiyār and Mūrukar. These Nāyanmār pursued the path of devotion known as Akamārga. This mārga is the path of bhakti pursued with service to Siva and His servitors.

The sacrifice of Kannappar who gouged one of his eyes and fixed it on the bleeding eye of Siva's is referred in verse 52. Verse 53 hails the service of Sentanār, by birth an untouchable. His devotion touched Siva who partook of his offering, namely the jelly-like pottage of flour, wrapped in a piece of threadbare old cloth.

Some of the episodes relating to St. Sambandhar, not narrated in the authentic hagiography Periya Puranam, are also mentioned in this work. Hearing the news of child Sambandhar getting fed with the breast-milk of Uma from a golden goblet, the breasts of the Pāndyan queen grew lactiferous. A latter-day work by Sivappirakāsar also refers to this episode.

An illustrative verse of the Sivagnāna Bhotam is in point. It says: "... the richly jeweled woman's breast-milk and tears at first are not (to be seen before the woman gives birth to a child); but later arise. Even so, who could know Him (Siva) who like the shadow of water is without visible form, if He did not reveal Himself, taking visible form?"

I'll now refer but to one verse that catalogues the greatness of Sambandhar. The form of this verse which bears the number 70, is cast almost mnemonically. The verse is as follows:

"Boat, palanquin, inexhaustible purse, singing
to shut,

Palmyra, cymbals, wasteland – littoral region,
palm-leaf,

Curing fever, giving life to bones: these indeed are

Deeds related to the loftily glorious Prince of
Pukali."

Many are the miracles that occurred in the life of Sambandhar. This verse lists ten of them.

1. Boat: The river Mulli was in spate. Abandoning their boats, the boatmen went away. The boy-saint got into a boat with his devotees, hymned the praises of Siva and reached the other bank near which was situate the shrine of Kollampūdūr.
2. Palanquin: The boy-saint went on foot to adore at the shrines of Siva. His itinerary during midsummer proved trying. At this, Siva, the presiding deity of Nelvāyil Aratthurai blessed him with a palanquin inlaid with pearls and a pair of divine trumpets.
3. Inexhaustible purse: To enable his father to perform the Āgamic sacrifices, the boy-saint appealed to and received from Siva an inexhaustible purse of gold

at Tiruvāvaduthurai.

4. Singing to shut: The threshold through which the adytum of the shrine at Tirumaraikkādu could be directly reached was closed to the public. St. Appar hymned open the doors and the boy-saint sang them shut.
5. Palmyra: The samanas of Otthūr jeered at a Siva-bhakta, the male palmyra trees of whose grove yielded no fruit. At the imploring of the bhakta, the boy-saint caused the female trees to yield fruit aplenty.
6. Wasteland-littoral region: Nanipalli, the birth-place of Sambandhar's mother was surrounded by wasteland. During his visit to this place, Sambandhar hymned the wasteland into a littoral region.
7. Cymbals: The day after his apotheosis, the boy-saint visited the shrine at Kolakka. There he hymned in melodic Tamil Siva, keeping time by the beat of his tender hands which grew more tender and roseate by this exercise. At this Siva gifted to him a pair of auric cymbals inscribed with the mystic pentad. Uma endowed the cymbals with sonal virtue.
8. Palm-leaf: In an ordeal by fire, the leaf of Sambandhar in which his patikam (a decad of hymns) was inscribed clove the current of the Vaikai river and proceeded in the opposite direction with a tremendous speed. The leaf of the Samanas in which their tenet was inscribed was swept away by the river. In this third and final test also Sambandhar emerged triumphant.
9. Fever: When the Pāndya suffered from a raging fever the boy-saint was invited by the Queen to

cure it. The samanās resented and said: "We will cure the King's left-half; let Sambandhar cure the right half. The samanās failed. The boy-saint cured the fever on the right side. However the fever on the right side occupied the left side. Then at the request of the King, Sambandhar cured him completely.

10. Giving life to bones:

A lass called Pūmpāvai died by a snake-bite. Her father cremated her body and preserved its remains in an urn. At her father's request Pūmpāvai was resurrected by Sambandhar.

The Tirukkalitruppatiyār also narrates the miracles wrought by St.Appar, St.Sundarar and St.Mānickavāchakar.

Verse 22 and a few verses following it deal with Siva-yoga. Verse 22 says:

"Ādhāra-Yoga and Nirādhāra-Yoga are the two
Leading to *Mēdānam*; the first is to be practised
As taught by the Guru by establishing the divine forms
In the prescribed centres; the second is gained through
Grace, remaining unattached to the Ādhāras."

Truly speaking Ādhāra-Yoga should culminate in Nirādhāra-Yoga, namely Mēdānam. Mēdānam is beyond the Ādhāras, namely Mūlādhara (in shape like a four-petalled lotus), Swātishtānam (in shape like a six-petalled lotus), Manipūraka (in shape like a ten-petalled lotus), Anāhata (in shape like a twelve-petalled lotus), Vishuddhi (in shape like a sixteen-petalled lotus) and Āgna (in shape like a three-petalled lotus), according to Abhidāna Chintāmani. These kendrās are between podex and the centre of the eye-brows. Mēdānam resembles a thousand-petalled lotus. It is the lotus of Siva in His form of pure effulgence. St.Mānickavāchakar hails Siva as the light (flame) which is beginningless and endless. St.Sekkizhār hails Nataraja as the One of infinite light. The Ādhāras are extra-physical loci.

The Tirumantiram is a manual for the practitioners of Siva-Yoga. It is in arcane language and the Guru decodes it and recodes it for the understanding of his chela.

The meditator should meditate the object of meditation in subtler and subtler ways. If he does so, he will become as subtle as his object of meditation; in that state the two will be inseparably oned in an ineffable beatitude.

After initiation, the Guru entrusts to the chela the mystic pentad which he must chant as ordained. The forms of the panchakshara are many and multifoliate. The Guru entrusts that type of the pentad which is commensurate with the chela's spiritual attainment.

Siva confers on the practitioner speechless beatitude. The Siva-Yogi thus established in Silence revels in the sempiternal bliss of Siva-consciousness.

The Tirukkalitruppatiyar admonishes the practitioner of Siva-Yoga thus:

"Do not hanker after the phenomenal; do not get befuddled;

Seek not union with Siva through your self-effort.

If you remain poised in impartial Grace, you will
Abide with Siva – the Timeless -, and flourish
Unaffected by the past, the present and the
to-come."

All phenomenal attachment should cease. Then attachment to Siva, wholly, solely and exclusively, can be gained.

If all noises cease, then will be heard the sound of the salvific anklets of Siva. Siva is the King of Para-Nāda and Uma the Queen of Para-Vintu. The sound of Siva's anklets can be heared only by the inner ear. St. Ceramān Perumān, a Nayānār, heard this divine sound every day, at the end of his puja.

Jivan-muktas, while they live, remain dead to the world. They indeed are untroubled by death. They have gained deedlessness. They don't do anything. Things are done through them by Grace.

The goal is to get rid of samsāra (the cycle of birth and death). Dying to the world one lives eternally with Siva.

Verse 48 says:

"The Supreme Ens that is beyond the ken of eyes
and thought
Manifests before Yogis and delights their sight
and thinking.
Like the banyan seed in which is hid the tree,
Yogis ensoul in ecstasy Siva – the uncontainable."

Saiva Siddhanta teaches the mala-ridden soul to get rid of the malās. It is indeed Gnāna Yoga which is the remedy for the malady of malās.

Verse 57 says:

"The Gnosis of the True Ens is like the seed and its sprout;
It is like the unmanifest Siva, the hidden cause,
And its sprout, the visible effect. Unable to perceive
The seed in the sprout some miss the cause and some others
By their failure to foster the sprout, equally suffer loss."

Truly speaking the seed and the sprout are neither one nor two. This relationship that marks Siva and Sakti is tādānmya – a twosomeness in one, like the sun and its rays.

The relationship between the Pati and Pasu is advaitic. One cannot reckon it with numbers. It is not to be reckoned as one or two. It is non-dual. Even this dictum is not absolute. It is not distinct in the subject-object relationship. So, it is not two. It is. So, the experience of bliss is there. It is not, because it has transcended phenomenality. In transcendence alone at-one-ment is possible.

Verse 60 speaks of Siva-Puja.

"When through Grace the deed-defying deed is done through
Deedless deed, whatever one does is acceptable to Siva.
For His puja, any time and any place will do; the devotee can face
Any direction, and be seated on anything

assuming any posture."

The ways are there to pursue. However pursuers are but a few. Almost all of us are spiritual wastrels.

"Sheathe the sword in your scabbard" says verse 63. Soul indeed is the scabbard. Divine Gnosis which is Grace is the sword.

To emphasise servitorship, Siva Himself served as a servitor of Sundarar. This is the message of verse 72.

The greatness of the androgynic form of Siva is hailed in more places than one in the Tirukkalitruppatiyār. Verse 78 affirms thus:

"We do our acts with our limbs; even so the Lord-Master
Does His deeds of creation and the like through His Consort
Who is His Sakti; He is centred in Her and She in Him.
Thus do they sport Their form of Mother cum Father
Unto all; this indeed is the true nature of Siva."

Sivam is static; His Sakti is dynamic. Sivam as Godhead is Sat-Cit-Ānanda. It is His *Swarūpa lakshana,* His true state. When Siva deigns to help the souls, He acts through His Sakti.

The sun stands where it is. Its rays pervade the earth and help mankind. This *tādātmiya* characterizes Siva-Sakti. This is duality in oneness.

The relationship between Siva and Sakti is not one merely of Nāyaka-Nāyaki-Bhāva (interpreted by some as bridal mysticism) which is met within religious lore. The element of sex is present in the Nāyaka-Nāyaki-Bhāva.

The Sivagnāna Siddhiyār affirms that Siva is a Brahmachāri (celibate / bachelor) and Sakti whose words are milk-like, is an eternal Virgin. Virgin's conception in phenomenal terminology is a misconception. Sakti, the Virgin, is ever pregnant with Grace. Her milk-like words are symbolic of the milk of mercy.

Siva's androgynic form is unique. As Stella Kramrisch observes, this form affirms the impossibility of sexual union. In other words, it characterizes the transcendence of sex.

Uninformed religions fight with each other. Their works are packed with mismos (hatred). Some religions believe in violence, coercion, persecution and inquisition. Besides they advocate perdition. Dogmas and creeds, not love and kindness, characterize them. Nothing can be more irreligious than wars in the name of religion.

The following passage quoted at page 77 (Darkness At Noon by Arthur Koestler, RTP Special Edition) speaks for itself.

"When the existence of the church is threatened, she is released from the commandments of morality. With unity as the end, the use of every means is sanctified – cunning, treachery, violence, simony, prison, death. For all order is for the sake of the community, and the individual must be sacrificed to the common good." – Dietritch Von Nicheim, Bishop of Verden: De Schismate libi iii A.D. 1411.

Saiva Siddhanta saves us from irreligion.

Verse 92 says:

"Any analysis of anything in whatever form in
any place

If undertaken with exemplary skill will reveal the
Primal Cause.

THAT indeed is Siva concorporate with
His Consort.

Acknowledge and hail THAT. Pursue any path –

Bheda, Abheda or Bhedābheda. You will
eventually

Gain the redeeming knowledge."

Siva is the Life of life, the Soul that ensouls all souls. As Ashtamūrti – the five elements, the sun, the moon and the soul, He is omnipresent.

The soul will find itself if it loses itself in Siva. Siva is Maha Rudra. *Rudrārchy is the soul's Republic.* Siva ensouls all souls; yet He remains unaffected. Verse 87 says:

"Do you deem the worms and the bacteria in your
stomach

As yours, and do you experience what they
experience?

So too are the embodied and the bodyless but
eternal souls

For Siva who stands divinely free."

Siva is the Activiser of all tattvas; He is the Life animating all lives; He is male, female and neither of either. He stands unbeknown to each and everything He pervades.

The following verses of Emerson are in point. God says:

"Far or forgot to me is near;

Shadow and sunlight are the same;

> The vanish'd gods to me appear;
> And one to me are shame and fame."
> "They reckon ill who leave me out;
> When me they fly, I am the wings;
> I am the doubter and the doubt,
> And I the hymn the Brahmin sings."

Truly speaking, prayer comes from God and goes to God.

Verse 90 affirms thus:

> "The billowy sea suffers people to bathe in it; yet it is
> Measureless for the bathers; even so is the immeasurable God
> Who deigns to incarnate on earth to redeem and rule
> His devotees..."

Siva alone is the Bestower. Souls thrive thanks to His Grace. The Guru too is deemed a bestower. Yet it is to be remembered that his bestowal comes from Siva. In other words, it comes through him but not from him.

Verse 93 runs as follows:

> **முத்தி முதற் கொடிக்கே மோகக் கொடி படர்ந்**
> **தத்தி பழுத்த தருளென்னும் - கத்தியினால்**
> **மோகக் கொடியறுக்க முத்திப் பழம் பழுக்கும்**
> **ஏகக் கொடியெழுங் காண்.**

> Over the liana of soul which should yield the fruit of Deliverance
> The creeper of Delusion spread and produced figs galore.

If this day, with Grace – the knife –, the creeper of
Delusion

Be cut the sundered, the fruit of Deliverance

Will be yielded by the upspiralling Primal Liana.

Salvation is for soul and not for matter. With brambles and briars, matter obstructs the path of salvation. A myriad distractions and deviations come into being. Thèy should be removed with the help of Grace. Then the soul can come by its goal.

The three concluding verses are thanks-giving verses. The devotee is eternally thankful to Siva and His servitors. True and devout service characterizes the servant of Siva. Casting away all attachment, getting solely attached to Siva and His servitors spells true freedom. It is to gain this freedom, everyone should strain. More easily said than done.

6. The Florarama of the Kurinji-p-Pāttu

The word Kurinji refers to a specific region and a flower of its region.

The Kurinji-p-Pāttu has been translated into English by Ponnambalam Coomaraswami, G.U. Pope, J.M. Nallaswami Pillai, J.V.Chelliah, P.N.Appuswami and R.Rajaratnam. The translation of Prof.A.Dakshinamurti is in print.

This work is one of the Patthu-p-Pāttu and it bears the name of a flower called Kurinji which blossoms once in twelve years.

Poets the world over have named their works after flowers or even gardens. Gulistan (Rose Garden) and The Perfumed Garden the original of which is in Persian are famous opuses.

Modern poets, like the ancient ones, are aware of the significance of flowers and their verses burgeon with flowers. Tamil is unique in the sense that even its classical prose revels in a riot of flowers. I will now cite a passage from the commentary of Iraiyanār Aka-p-Porul.

"சந்தனமும் சண்பகமும் தேமாவும் தீம்பலவும் ஆசினியும் அசோகமும் கோங்கும் வேங்கையும் குரவமும் விரிந்து, நாகமும் திலகமும் நறவும் நந்தியும் மாதவியும் மல்லிகையும் மௌவலொடு மணங் கமழ்ந்து, பாதிரியும் பாவை ஞாழலும் பைங்கொன்றையும் பிணி அவிழ்ந்து, பொரிப் புன்கும் புன்னாகமும் முருக்கொடு முகை சிறந்து, வண்டறைந்து தேன் ஆர்ந்து வரிக்குயில்கள் இசைபாட, தண்தென்றல் இடைவிராய்த் தனியவரை முனிவு செயும் பொழிலது நடுவண், ஒரு மாணிக்கச் செய்குன்றின் மேல், விசும்பு துடைத்து, பசும்பொன் பூத்து, வண்டு துவைப்பத் தண்தேன் துளிப்பதோர் வெறியுறு நறுமலர் வேங்கை கண்டாள். கண்டு, பெரியதோர் காதல் களிகூர்ந்து, தன் செம்மலர்ச் சீறடிமேல் சிலம்பு கிடந்து சிலம்பு

புடைப்ப, அம்மலர் அணிக்கொம்பர் நடை கற்பதென நடந்து சென்று, நறைவிரி வேங்கை நாண்மலர் கொய்தாள்; கொய்தவிடத்து, மரகதமணி விளிம்பு அடுத்த மாணிக்கச் சுனை மருங்கினதோர் மாதவிவல்லி மண்டபத்துப், போது வேய்ந்த பூநாறு கொழுநிழற்கீழ்க் கடிக் குருக்கத்திக் கொடி பிடித்துத் தகடுபடு பசும்பொற் சிகரங்களின் முகடு தொடுத்து வந்து இழிதரும் அருவி, பொன் கொழித்து, மணி வரன்றி, மாணிக்கத்தொடு வயிரம் உந்தி, அணிகிளர் அருவி ஆடகப்பாறைமேல் அதிர் குரல் முரசின் கண்ணிரட்ட, வண்டும் தேனும் யாழ் முரல, வரிக்குயில்கள் இசைபாடத், தண்தாது தவிசு படப் போர்த்ததோர் பளிக்குப்பாறை மணித்தலத்து மிசை, நீல ஆலவட்டம் விரித்தாற் போலத் தன் கோலக் கலாவம் கொளவிரித்து, முளை இள ஞாயிறு இளவெயில் எரிப்ப, ஓர் இளமயில் ஆடுவது நோக்கி நின்றாள்."

St. Mānickavāchakar's Tirukkovaiyār opens thus:

திருவளர் தாமரை சீர்வளர் காவிகள் ஈசர் தில்லைக்
குருவளர் பூங்குமிழ் கோங்கு பைங்காந்தள் கொண்டோங்கு தெய்வம்
மருவளர் மாலையோர் வல்லியின் ஒல்கி யனநடைவாய்ந்
துருவளர் காமன்தன்வென்றிக் கொடி போன்று ஒளிர்கின்றதே.

My mentor Tiruloka Sitaram indited an epiclet yclept Gandharva Gānam. The hero, a bard, stands before the entrance of the Gandharva-loka and ere long, touches its gate. Thus he thinks aloud:

... ... மணிக்கதவம்
எற்றி அலைத்தே எழில் குலுங்கும் செம்மணிகள்
ஆடும் கடை நாவில் ஆயிரமாம் பூ உதிர்த்துப்
பரவுவதைப் பார்க்கின்றேன், ஈதென்ன?

He stands dazed by what he sees. The bijou bells of beauty swing and dance and from the tips of their tongues fall flowers in a thousand showers singing songs of praise.

Then he hears a voice which says:

நித்திலத்து நீல நிலவின் கதிர் மணி நா
இத்தரையில் சிந்தும் ஒலி எப்போதும் இவ்வாறே

வண்ண மலர்க் குவையாய் வானத் திரையெங்கும்
நண்ணி நிறைகின்ற நல்லியல்பே ...

[It is so, even so; the sound that falls
From the tongues of the bright bell
Of azure moon pearly, doth always like this
Reach and fill Heaven's mantle
In flowers of Iris hues.]

At this he says: "நான் கண்டேன்" and adds:

சொல்லின் சுக நிலையில் சொக்கும் கவி மலராய்ச்
செல்லுவதும் காண்கின்றேன் ...

[This "I saw.
Lo and behold! the charmed blooms of poesy
Burgeoning from the magic harmony of words
Onward move. Whither are they bound?"]

To this query the unbodied voice answers thus:

அல்லல் அகற்று ...
. . .   .
செந்திருவின் ஆணையினால் சேடியரும்
உன்பால் வருவார் எதிர்கொள்ள ...

[Eschew pother! . . .
By the hest of the divine damozel
The abijails will come to welcome you.]

Then the hero and the heroine quaff the celestial cordial. Again the hero witnesses the transformation of sounds into flowers. At this the heroine says:

அழல் ஒளி காலும் வள்ளத்
தமுதினைப் பருகி இன்பம்

தழுவிய களிப்பில் தெய்வத்
தரள வெண்ணகையார் சிந்தும்
குழல் ஒலிக் குவையாய் யுங்கட்
குவலயம் பூத்து மற்றும்
உமிழ்ந்தவை அன்றோ பூவின்
தேன் எனத் துளிர்க்கு மாலோ!

["Having crushed the cordial
From comely cups in delight great
The divine damozels of pearly teeth
Hug the lute and breathe a note;
The breathe'd note blooms on earth;
The nectar sweet of all blossoms
That on earth do burgeon sweet
Is but the spit of the divine belles."]

I may incidentally mention the role played by flowers in puja. There are only two works in Tamil, they being Pushpa Vidi and Pushpa Phalan. These bring out the spiritual efficacy gained by the devotee who offers flowers in puja.

There are four categories of flowers, they being, Kottu-p-pū (flowers obtained from branches), Kodi-p-pū (flowers of creepers), Nēr-p-pū (flowers growing in water) and Nila-p-pū (flowers of the soil).

Pushpa Phalan deals with twenty two types of flowers of Kottu-p-pū, ten of Kodi-p-pū, five of Nēr-p-pū and twenty five of Nila-p-pū.

Leaves are also offered along with flowers. On occasions they alone are offered. Offering garlands of flowers is also a must in temple worship.

Of the service rendered by Muruka Nāyanār this is what the Periya Purānam says:

"Waking before the break of day, he would bathe

In the sacred flood; then would he fare forth

And gather in baskets variform and innumerable flowers

After carefully examining them before plucking

To see if they are about to bloom fragrantly;

These he collected to deck the Deity's matted hair

Whence course the Ganga and the moon.

"Flowers of branches, blossoms of plants, blooms

Of cool waters and petalled flowers of rich creepers

He would gather, as flowers fit to deck the crown

Of the Lord of the beauteous smile – the Originator

Of the Vedas -, whose bow was

The Mount Meru strung with a serpent.

"Then the wearer of the sacred thread would seek

A clean and sequestered place and would weave

Wreaths, chaplets, garlands, fragrant bouquets,

Leis to engird the staves, wreaths like anklets

And huge nosegays spilling fragrant pollen."

Ashta Pushpa (eight flowers) are considered very worthy. These are symbolic of eight great virtues.

The sole goal of soul is the gaining of the feet of

God. How are the hallowed feet described? They are referred to as "malar ati" (flower-feet). On occasions the flower is particularized. The lotus indeed is the flower so chosen.

So, flowers enjoy a status which is greater than even fruit. Kurinji blossoms once in twelve years and so it is twelve times more worthy than all other flowers.

In the west too, flowers play a vital role – more social than religious. Indeed it is from the west, the saying: "Say it with flowers" has originated. There too, scentless flowers were once considered valueless. Goldsmith speaks of "blossomed furze unprofitably gay." Furze, though good to look at was not worn by women. Kurall 650 says:

> இணர் ஊழ்த்தும் நாறா மலர் அனையர் கற்றது
> உணர விரித்துரையா தார்.

> [Like scentless flowers in blooming garland bound
>
> Are who can't their lore acquired to others' ears
> expound.]

Speaking of the ninety nine flowers of the Kurinji-p-Pāttu, G.U.Pope says that they are generally fitted with an epithet. This remark by Pope is loaded with significance. I will revert to this a little later.

Even as an alumnus of the elementary school I was taught the verses of Avvaiyār. I quote hereunder a significant verse.

> அற்றகுளத்தின் அருநீர்ப் பறவை போல்
> உற்றுழித் தீர்வார் உறவு அல்லர்; அக்குளத்தில்
> கொட்டியும் ஆம்பலும் நெய்தலும் போலவே
> ஒட்டி உறுவார் உறவு.

In English the verse runs thus:

"Like water-fowls, they that desert th' dry pond,
They that abandon the impoverished
Are no kinsfolk; but they that hold fast
Even in distress like the unforsaking plants
Of kotti, āmpal and neytal are truly
The kith and kin."

Kotti is Aponogeton monostachyum, āmpal is water-lily and neytal is the white Indian water-lily. These plants have character. Trees forgive them that fell them. Flowers even when crushed breathe fragrance. The following verse is in point.

கார் கூந்தல் ஏறி களித்திருந்த மல்லிகையே
ஆர் செய்த வஞ்சகத்தால் அல்லல் உற்றாய்? - நேர்மையிலாப்
பித்தர் உன்னைப் பிய்த்துக் கசக்கிப்பின்
அத்தர்எனக் கொள்வதா லா?

No wonder so much stress is laid on the role played by flowers. Multifoliate is their splendour. A close reading of Kapilar's Kurinji-p-Pāttu is bound to be rewarding. Descriptive epithets of flowers add a dimension to their greatness.

G.U. Pope, a translator of the Kurinji-p-Pāttu, is a close student of Tamil. He admires the poetic conventions of Tamil. He feels a rapture when he delves into the mystery behind them. He feels happy to acquaint himself with the fragrant role that flowers play in Tamil literature. He even desires to distil into the westerners the delight he palpably feels.

The ancient Tamil warriors wore certain flowers before they fared forth to the battle-field. Commenting on this he said: "This is to us a novel form of the language of flowers ... These garlands were intended to strike terror into the eyes of the opposing hosts, and to some extent supplied the place of military uniform. The armies of Europe have never been unmindful of the moral effect of the soldier's head-dress, though it would be a novel experience if our troops went forth to war like a marching garden of flaming and fragrant flowers."

Let me, in passing, observe that Shakespeare has described the march of an army in the form of a wood. The witches affirmed that 'none of woman born shall harm Macbeth.' The supplementary remark of an Apparition runs thus:

"Macbeth shall never vanquished be until

Great Birnam wood to high Dunisinane Hill

Shall come against him."

This verbal legerdemain lulled Macbeth into a sense of security which is mortal's chiefest enemy.

Well, flowers are not only endowed with fragrance but are also endowed with the power of evocation. Their symbolic content is both great and natural. They speak the language of Nature. Ophelia tells Laertes:

"There's rosemary, that is for remembrance –

Pray you, love, remember – and there's pansies,

that is for thoughts."

Then Ophelia turns to the king and says: "There's fennel for you, and columbines." To the queen she says: "There's rue for you, and there's some for me, we may call it the herb of grace o' Sundays – O, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy, I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died – they say made a'good end."

From a careful perusal of the notes furnished by John Dover Wilson we can arrive at the following equations:

Rosemary = remembrance;
Fennel = flattery;
Columbines = cuckoldry;
Rue (herb of grace) = sorrow;
Daisy = dissembling;
Violets = faithfulness.

English poets have also adopted the poetic conventions of Greek, Latin and Italian.

It is well known that Milton composed a moving monody to bewail a friend of his who met with a watery grave. The poem opens thus:

"Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more
Ye myrtle brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude,
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year."

Dr. Johnson adversely commenting on this poem said: "... ... passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy ... where there is leisure for fiction there is no grief."

About this scathing animadversion of Johnson, K. Deighton observes: "With readers of mature taste they will go for little, or rather will provoke a smile of amused surprise." Deighton then proceeds to explain the Miltonic stance in the light of Masson's analysis and says: "If passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions, if passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Mincius, neither does passion perform such simple acts of literary art as the construction of clear sentences, the formation of lines and metres, or the invention of rhymes. Grief, in its first act, in poets as other people, consumes itself in 'Ohs' and 'Ahs', in sobs and agitated gestures, in dull numbed musings, incoherent verbal bursts, pacings of the chamber through the weary night. To poets, however, as soon as there is a lull of comparative tranquillity, and aiding perhaps to bring on that lull, there comes the use of those artifices of expression which are with them hardly any longer, but the very habits of their minds."

Thus we can see that the scathing animadversion of Dr.Johnson notwithstanding, LYCIDAS continues to enjoy a well-merited popularity among scholars of English literature.

Death too can cause one surcharged with intense sorrow to wield, on a sudden, the language of poesy. Years ago, my esteemed friend Dr.A.Dakshinamurthy quoted a line of lament made by an unlettered man who burst into verse when he heard of the death of a noble, charitable and altruistic person. The lament was a long one; however Prof.A.Dakshinamurthy remembered but one line – which is as follows: "சாலையே, சோலையே, சத்திரத்து வாழையே!" It is thus the multifoliate greatness of the dead one is touchingly brought out. சாலை, சோலை and சத்திரத்து வாழை are no one's exclusive possession. These serve the public and no privileged individual.

Kapilar's detailed description of ninety nine flowers rushed forth with a spontaneity at once irresistible and uncontainable.

Inter alia, flowers play a martial role. Andrew Marvell was of this opinion like Pope. Says Marvell:

"See how the flowers, as at parade,

Under their colours stand displayed.

Each regiment in order grows,

That of the tulip, pink and rose."

Flowers are never dumb. Flowers are words which even a babe understands. It fondles them and speaks to them. If you are a blessed person you can hear their confabulation. As Emerson said: "Earth laughs in flowers."

The mystic poet Blake said: "To create a little flower is the labour of ages."

Flowers are even lovelier than their names. They are soul-uplifting. They are worthy offerings to God.

Flowers have an expression of countenance as much as men or women. They represent emotions. They are laden with *rasa*-s.

Robert Bridges celebrates them.

"Thick on the woodland floor

Gay company shall be

Primrose and Hyacinth

And frail Anemone

Perennial strawberry-bloom,

Woodsorrel's penciled veil,

Disheval'd willow-weed
And Orchis purple and pale." - The Idle Flowers.

Alice Brown's praise is noteworthy.

"The pink laburnum lays her cheek
In married, matchless, lovely bliss
Against her golden mate, to seek
His airy kiss.
Tulips in faded splendour drest
Brood o'er their beds, a slumbrous gloom
Dame Peony, red and ripe with bloom,
Swells the silk housing of her breast."

Flowers are medicinal too.

When flowers die, they become curatives. George Herbert says:

"Fit while ye live, for smell or ornament
And after death for cures."

I will quote two passages from Milton, one from Lycidas and the other from Paradise Lost.

"Throw hither all your enamell'd eyes
That on the green turf suck the honied showers
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies.
The tufted crow-toe and pale jassamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freakt with jet
The glowing violet,

The musk-rose and the well-attired woodbine
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive hand,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed
And daffodillies fill their cup with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycidas lies."

The above flowers wear a funereal solemnity. On the contrary, flowers are also full of life and vigour. Says Milton:

"On either side
Acanthus and each odorous bushy shrub
Fence'd with verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses and jessamin
Rear'd high their flourish'd heads between and wrought
Mosaic; under foot the violet,
Crocus, and hyacinth with rich inlay
Border'd the ground, more colour'd than with stone
Of costliest emblem."

Kapilar's epithets are full of significance. வள் இதழ் ஒண்காந்தள், தண்கயக் குவளை, செங்கொடு வேரி, உரிது நாறு அவிழ் தொத்து உந்தூழ், எரிபுரை எறுழம், மணிப்பூங் கருவிளை, பல் இணர்க் குரவம், விரிமலர் ஆவிரை, தேங்கமழ் பாதிரி, பெருந்தண் சண்பகம், நீள்நறு நெய்தல் and மணிக்குழல்கள் கமழ் நெய்தல் are but a few exempla.

Flowers have individuality. In Lalla Rookh, Thomas Moore says:

"Our rocks are rough, but smiling there
The acacia waves her yellow hair,
Lonely and sweet, nor loved the less
For flow'ring in a wilderness."

Of Almond Blossom, Edwin Arnold says:

"Almond blossom, sent to teach us
That the spring days soon will reach us,
Lest with longing over-tired,
We die as the violets died."

It is said that Arbutus, the darling of the woods, blossoms when Earth grieves sorely. It usheres in solace and comfort.

According to Homer, souls unbodied dwell in ever-flowering meads of ashfodel.

Emerson said: "Every aster in my hand
Goes home loaded with a thought."

Of azaleas, Harriet Mc Ewan Kimball says:

"A very rapture of white,
A wedlock of silence and light:
White, white as the wonder undefiled
Of Eve just wakened in Paradise."

None can ignore even a mean flower.

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears"

is the solemn affirmation of William Wordsworth. No wonder the English bards sang of Blueberries, Bluebells, Broom, Buttercup, Convolvulus, Edelweiss, Eglantine, Flower-de-Luce, Forget–me–not, Gentian, Goldenrod, Gorse, Harebell, Hawthorne, Honeysuckle, Hyacinth, Ivy, Jasmine, Knapweed, Lichen, Lilac, Lily, Lotus, Love-in-Idleness, Marigold, Mignonette, Moly, Morning-Glory, Myrtle, Narcissus, Nettle, Pink, Poppy, Primrose, Rhodora, Rose, Rosemary, the flower of the Sensitive Plant, Snowdrop, Sunflower, Sweet Basil, Sweet Pea, Tuberose, Tulip, Violet, Wind-flower and even an anonymous flower that grew in a crannied wall. Tennyson sums up the very purpose of life thus:

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower – but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

God is Pati, man is Pasu and flower is Pāsam. It is to comprehend the meaning of these Tiripadārtha, I, a Saiva Siddhantin, am endeavouring hard over the years.

7. Leaves from a Log: An Assessment

Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar is too great a theme for me. He is a Virat Purusha; I dare not measure him with my little finger.

For over two decades I looked at him only through the spectacles of his works. An ever-crescent admiration for him grew in me during these years. My longing to have a physical darshan of him met with fruition in 1980. Even as he bade me a warm welcome, I fell prostrate at his feet and still feel the presence of his sacred feet in my bosom. I revere him as my father, guru and benefactor.

The impact of my first darshan of the Professor is still green in my memory. Unable to contain my ecstasy when I first met him, I wrote a letter in Tamil verse entitled 'Manollāsam,' to my friend Prof. K.G. Seshadri. With your leave, let me quote a few passages therefrom.

சாந்தமலை காந்தமலை
சர்வ பரித்தியாக மலை
ஓரேப்பும் ஸைனையும்
ஒன்றான ரஜதமலை.

[Sānta malai, gānta malai
Sarva paritthyāga malai
Orepum Sinaiyum
Ondrāna rajata malai.]

He is:

A hill of peace, a magnetic hill,
A mount of total self-sacrifice,

He is the twinned argent peaks
Of Horeb as well as Sinai.

சுத்த வித்தை சுயரூபம்
சுகர் வாமர் சோமதேவர்
புற்றெடுத்த வான்மீகர்
புற்றுடைத்துப் போந்து விட்டார்.

[Suddha Vitthai suya rupam
Sukhar, Vamar, Soma-devar;
Putreduttha Vānmikar
Putrudaitthu-p-ponthu vittar.]

He is:

The true form of Suddha Vidya,
He is Sukha, Vama and Soma-deva;
Breaking the covering of the ant-hill
Valmiki has come out to tread the earth.

ஓமரவ ரோவிடவர்
ஒய்யார வர்ஜிலவர்
தாந்தே அவர் தாஸோ அவர்
தான் தோன்றி சுயம்பு அவர்
தாவில் சீர் வடவாணர்
தண்டமிழின் பாவாணர்
சாஸரவர் சகப்பிரியர்
சாது ஜன சங்கத்தவர்
என்சொல்லி ஏற்றிடுவேன்!
என்னுரைக்கு வலிமையுண்டோ?

[Omarava rovidavar
Oyyara Vergilavar
Daante avar Tasso avar

Tān tondri Suyampu avar.
Tāvil seer Vatavānar
Tanntamizhin Pāvānar
Chaucer avar Sakappiriyar
Sadu jana Sankgatthavar.
Yen solli yetriduven
Yennuraikku valimai yundo?]
He is Homer; He is Ovid;
He is Vergil, the graceful;
He is Dante; he is Tasso;
He is indeed the one self-born;
He is a flawless bard of Sanskrit;
He is a minstrel of serene Tamil;
He is Chaucer; he is Shakespeare.
He is of the Holy Assembly.
What can I say? How can I hail him?
Are my words potent to portray him?

I received from the Professor a copy of 'Leaves from a Log' on 29 June 1980. This work is an anthology of verses indited by him over a period of six years. It differs widely in substance and articulation because of the time, place and circumstances of their composition. Yet the arrangement of the selected verses has achieved a sequence under nine books so as to imply a movement, a development and an evolution of sorts.

Of his work, the Professor says: "Notwithstanding the frequent use of the first person singular, there is little autobiography as such, the Persona 'I' being more fanciful than real, more prototypical than sharply individual." It is so, obviously so. Yet the signature of the composer is palpable in each of the verses.

In his Preface, the Professor says: "Clearly, this was never planned as a 'book' with a steady progression in theme, internal consistency of tone or structural finish. The satiric, farcical and the ironic co-exist with the sombre, serious and the tragic. These are admitted leaves from a spasmodic travel-log, and exposed on the pages are sundry fragments of an inconspicuous and intermittent journey through space and time."

Most of the pieces in Books VII, VIII and IX were written during the Emergency. The Professor even ran the risk of getting arrested. Breaking this intelligence to me, he asked me: "What have I done to court arrest?" I said: "Appa, you have arrested the attention of the discerning public. How can this be suffered to go unnoticed by Ālavantār?". Ālavantār is a Tamil Vaishnavite devotee. Ālavantār also means: 'the one who has come to rule.' The threat of arrest was dangling for sometime like the Damocles' sword. True. But no one has ever heard of the sword falling down.

Immense indeed is our Professor's power of communication. He hit the nail on the head. The nail, however, did not make any dent on a blockhead. Alas, India that is Bharat is replete with nail-proof stupidity and obstinacy.

In modernised India, a bevy of ultra-modern girls and even middle-ageless women constitute the last chapter of the Bible. Yes, it is Revelation. More is revealed than is decent. In the 'Departure Lounge,' the

Professor witnesses a scene of mimic and motley, almost erotic. His description runs thus:

"One was draped in the flimsiest fabric,
a greenish transparency.
Clutching Kama Sutra, the high-heeled one,
the sleepy-eyed, sauntered forth."

The puzzled Professor whispers a question.

"O low-hipped Shrimati! What suction holds your saree in position?"

Anon, the Professor is air-borne inside a floating Trisanku's heaven, between the earth and the sky. He arrives at London, enjoys a night of dreamless sleep and wakes up betimes.

"Serene was the morning but the streets wore stains of the night's revelry."

How different is London from the suaveolent city of Māvintam which is thus depicted by Pukazhendi in his Nala Venpa.

"And there's a city broad and fair
where girls of flower-frail loveliness
Full-oft the well-waters pour
O'er saffroned frame, o'er musky trees;
Then flows a fragrant ooze so rich
The ambling tusker in the street
With effort keeps his feet."

Of his verse-pattern, the Professor says: "The form of verse used throughout is a unit of seventeen syllables with a pause at the end of the tenth." This pattern is more or less similar to the Sanskrit anushtup. It is also similar to the Tamil Kural-Venpa. The regular Venpa metre consists of four-line stanzas of which the first three lines are tetrametres and the fourth a tertrametre catalectic. Venpa is not a medium designed for narration. More so is the Kurall-Venpa. However Pukazhendi, a gifted Tamil bard, made use of it to indite an epiclet on Nala and Damayanti. I said the Kural-metre is even more difficult to handle for narrative purposes. I am convinced that only a genius like our Professor can handle a verse-form of seventeen syllables to achieve narration at once picturesque and graphic. His earlier experiments proved successful. His works namely: 'Tryst with the Divine,' 'Microcosmographia Poetica,' 'Tiru-Arutpa in English' and 'Devi Mahatmyam' bear eloquent testimony to his fabulous achievement. These were well received by the literati. His opus 'Leaves from a Log' settled, once for all, his mode of versification.

We will join our Professor who is now in London. In this city, he had lunch with a friend of his residing in Hampstead. His hosts were a mesallianced couple – a rantipoling wife and a rancorous husband. Their house was a mini-zoo. The lunch was an ageless potpourri, a West-East consortium. When he was about to take leave, his host burst out thus:

"No longer a place for a decent man,
this is like India." At this, pat came the retort from his wife.

"Why not," she shouted, "who wants hypocrisy?" "White is white and brown is brown" she concluded emphatically. The title of the verse which records our Professor's visit, is very illuminating. It is 'A Bit of Bharat'.

Nothing escaped the notice of our Argus-eyed Professor. During his sojourn in London, he was shocked to espy the sties of debauchery in parts of London. His verse 'Piccadilly' opens thus:

"'Piccadilly' where Eros rules is life,
anti-life, non-life at once.
For the dregs and wastrels and lost Adams
the sole point of convergence.
A super bazaar for buying surfeit
and sickness of life and love.
Mini, midi and maxi mix to make
the scene and Eve's emporium."

Here he met with:

"A glut of entertainment and abuse,
a dreary Walpurgisnicht."

This place was a den of blue films and striptease, sauna and titillation. Here throve clubs with see-through hostesses and topless maids. Of this ad hoc Bordello he says:

"Three flights of steps to the corridor-end
and there a séance in progress."

Alas, it was here shy virgins dared and widows revived and voyeurs sought variety. Here violence was food and libido and lust masqueraded as love.

In other cities too, "Jet-flown Call girls-Space-ship sexorama-Non-Hero Hot for Heroin" were in great demand. Vice-Queens and Porno-Magnates throve libidinously. Our professor shut his eyes and inly wept. With S.T.Coleridge he mourned this death-in-life.

In his travel, our Professor comes by an opportunity to participate in a Global Meet where oddments and assortments of vanity make a grand divertissement. Here follows his description.

> "Cloaks and colours are symbol adhesions
> and hide the great nudity.
> But each wants to blazon his unique hood;
> his ballooning egoism.
> Men in striking pied-piper jacketing
> and ladies of quality;
> The tall lone pipe-smoker, monologuing
> like the Ancient Mariner;
> The dark seagreen savant immaculate
> rises, scores a point, slumps down;
> The floating anaemic philosopher
> mumbles for a while, subsides;
> The brown African with a crown of gold
> spouts out her sorrow and fire;
> The lanky weather-beaten warrior
> reads his scroll of impeachment;
> The bull-in-the-china-shop delegate
> does some thunderous shouting;
> The bullet-headed interventionist
> hoo-haws and gesticulates.
> The puzzled schoolmasterish chairperson
> determinedly rings the bell.
> And the sprightly woman in jeans rises
> and demands a coffee-break."

For everyone including the symposiarch the coffee-break is a God-send.

Quotidian happenings distress a sensitive soul. Is all life a perverse parody? Is human existence an interim destined to terminate in extinction as a mere phantasma or a hideous dream? Is it to be swathed by a sempiternal fathomless Zero? No, No, at least for our Professor. He knows that the sun-rise is not far away. The day will dawn when Satyavan will die and yet be revived by the tapas of Savitri.

Maha Kavi Bharati affirmed thus: "Extinction canst not happen until Siva dies." Can Siva who is Kāla-kāla – the Slayer of Death –, die? Is not His Consort the aeviternal Magna Mater? Listen to Sir John Woodroffe, the Sākta.

"The great Mother who exists in all forms of Tantras and all Yantras, is as the Lalita says, the "unsullied treasure-house of beauty;" the Sapphire-Devi, whose slender waist, bending beneath the ripe fruit of Her breasts, swells into jewelled hips heavy with the promise of infinite maternities."

Our Professor is a sincere and ardent devotee of the Cosmic Mother, the symbolic impression of whose feet was installed in his puja-room for silent worship. Every mother, according to our Professor is entitled to veneration. In his verse 'Long Spring' he observes:

"The mother and the suckling child asleep:
She's the blessed feminine."

For him, a child is a potential God. In his verse 'Ministry of Grace' he asks:

"Isn't the child – any child – the secret place
where New Mankind may arise?"

Did not Tagore proclaim thus? "Every new-born child comes with the message that God is not still discouraged of mankind." It is the mother who delivers the child – not the father. Every womb is a sacred sanctum. If creation constitutes Godhead, then God is a Creatrix. Our Professor's verse: 'Trapped' opens thus:

"In a time of terror and helplessness
where's the ready safety-valve?"

This verse ends thus:

"What long centuries laboured to create
may be destroyed in a trice.
A fanatic egoism may destroy
a nation in slothful sleep.
Yet the grace of Mother is endless,
and, fallen, we rise again."

Like Thomas Babington Macaulay our Professor takes it for granted that his reader is familiar with the allusions abounding in his writings. An anaemic reader like me needs the tonic of notes. An annotated edition of our Professor's opus is a desideratum. I had, more than once, consulted his daughter Dr. Prema, to come by the meaning of certain words, terms and names occurring in this opus. Pericles, Papadupolus, Rivoli Terrace, Edith Cavel, Ma Joad, Ercles, Sonar Bangla, Tartuffe, Artemis, Gigi, Esmeralda, Ahab, Genji, Murasaki, Anice, Ginza, Kyoto, Annette, Mori, Melbowge, Ariadne, Medea, Powell, Madame Lu, Hebrides, Wilton, Caractacus, Arthur, Merlin, Soyinka, Sākambari, Orestes, Namibian, Athena, Raktabhija, Geraldine, Nastacia, Kacha, Shukra, Devayani, Yayati, Sarmishta, Baka, Rapaccini, Sancho, Erebus, Shumba-Nishumba, Sosostric and Mahisha:these stare at the face of massive mediocrity.

Our Professor is an adept at coining words and phrases. A few examples are blacketeer, word-fact, raggage, news-views, sexorama, owlologist, Beautility, shock-exchange and crystallographise. 'Foul and Fair' is a verse of his in which the word blacketeer occurs. He himself explained to me what this word means. A blacketeer is one who puts his black money to blacker use.

In India that is Bharat:

"There's room enough for booze, bounce and bhajans
and statge-managed seances.
All the verities are in abeyance
and all values in the morgue.
In this umbra of retreat absolute
the dark is still bright enough.
The tunnel may seem close and without end
but look! the light from afar!"

When I discussed this plight with him, he deigned to explain a vital arcanum. He said: "India is such a vast country that truth has a chance to hide itself somewhere."

This set me thinking. I could even arrive at a consoling conclusion. Truth, on occasions, must needs undertake an agngnāta vasam (an incognito living). During this period, its puissance through its recondite tapas gets prepared to manifest at the ordained hour with invincible prowess to reestablish dharma. Lord Krishna, son of Devaki, grew in secret as the son of Yasoda. God is Truth and His ways are mysterious.

Our Professor, poised in his self-devised coign of vantage, shoots his verbal arrows at his targets with unerring accuracy. He is not one who plays with words or even ideas. He knows what he does. He feels it his duty to recall vagrant inattention, to stimulate sluggish indifference and to rectify absurd misapprehension. He dares and acts, and acts and dares. He knows the result is in the lap of gods. He is a karma-yogi.

Thirty two are our Proessor's verses which emerged during the Emergency. When one suffers pain, one can at least cry out one's pain. If, however, the gubernatorial engine legislates against crying what can one do? It is then the heroic bard cries for the pained mass who stifle their sobs and suffer suffocation. Providing a vicarious outlet for angst and agony is certainly alleviatory. Attenuation through proxy ushers in a measure of consolation. For, how long can the oppressed survive on a diet of endurance?

It is densely dark before dawn. The imminent sunrise cannot be wished away by the legislative machinery. "Besides" said Ingersoll, "you must remember that every wrong in some way tends to abolish itself. It is hard to make a lie stand always. A lie will not fit a fact. It will only fit another lie made for the purpose. The life of a lie is simply a question of time. Nothing but truth is immortal."

Kurukshetra is no fiction. India that is Bharat was, is and will be a battle-field. The lis: 'Truth Versus Falsehood' suffers from a perpetual pendency. Arguments and counter-arguments are endless. However, a thousand arguments cannot alter a fact. A myriad iterations and reiterations cannot transform a fib into a fact.

Well, what indeed makes a tyrant? His own ambition will not do. It must be dovetailed with the servility of the subjects. After a time, the slave learns to love his slavery. Mahakavi Bharati cried: "When will our love of slavery perish?" Moses was condemned and contemned, times without number, by those whom he liberated.

The durbar of the despot is a sight to see. The genuflectory dance of his courtiers is made ready to anticipate his tune. The multitudinous display of his rāgam, dānam and pallavi compels the constant admiration of his committed audience. Lo, a dog is obeyed in office. All its barkings are fiats, yes, solemn commandments. The parvenu is hailed as an avatar of infallibility. Laws are for others, and the Fuehrer makes them and is himself above them. Hests, behests, orders, firmans and fatwas pervade the space between the Poles. When Sir Oracle opes his lips, let no dogs bark. The censors clamp all inner sensoria. The same slogans, the same non-news, the same misinformation. There is a divine regularity in this monstrous monotony. Vasectomy is complete. Conceiving is sin. Eunuch barons thrive on barrenness.

Well, did our Professor have a premonition years before the advent of the Emergency, when he wrote his verse 'Chalo Dhilli'. I will present to you his pre-view.

"I hear Karma's peremptory summons
and find my way to Delhi.
Here fester the organic filaments
of seven empires old.
Dream-city of seminal memories
and the haunt of all the ghosts.
Delhi is a megapolis now
with sundry conurbations.
Tourist, twister, tycoon, diplomat, spy:
who is who in Babylon?
In this giddy somnambulist whirl
what matters, when or which?
Where once the snakes hissed and the peacocks danced
now another show unfolds.
Where once a canal flowed, now ten thousand
vehicles rumble per hour.
Houri and hippie and Mata Hari
have bouts with destiny here.

For Delhi is the den of man-eaters
    and there are Eves on the prowl.
The city's acres are o'ergrown with bricks
    and the maddening Enclaves.
Winding criss-crossing streeets, lanes, avenues
    impose a traffic muddle.
Here new technology is hand in glove
    with Beelzebub and Mammon.
Cliffs of daring and peaks of possession
    alternate with ditches.
All things in this streamlined supermarket
    are lawful – and have a price.
Horned demons in human shapes, veiled Jekylls,
    sanctimonious sadists:
Their cures are scourges, their indulgences
    a teasing new appetite."

This verse and the verse titled 'Invitation' are printed in juxtaposition. These together present a preview of the Emergency.

I need not dwell at length on the graph of angst and agony drawn by our Professor. Thank God. He is ever our counsellor and consoler.

Leaves from the Professor's Log remind us of Eliot's 'Choruses From the Rock'. Eliot too journeyed to London and to its suburbs. Said the citizens whom he met:

"We toil for six days, on the seventh we must motor
To Hindhead, or Maidenhead."

G.B.Shaw deplored our crab-like progress. Eliot was even more positive. Lo, we are successfully progressing backwards. He spake thus:

"The world turns and the world changes,
But one thing does not change.

In all of my years, one thing does not change.
However you disguise it, this thing does
not change:
The perpetual struggle of Good and Evil."

People, alas, get accustomed to suffering. They ask: "Where is the tribulation with which we are not familiar?" Trapped in this plight they are apparently beyond redemption. Mahakavi Bharati said: "It is beyond my heart's endurance when I behold the debased men." The situation cries for the advent of a Mahatma. Evil cannot prevail for ever. Truth, in due time, will assert itself. Satyameva Jayate. Satyam ultimately triumphs. Who won the war in the Ramayana? It was Rama. And Rama is Srinivasa. Who won the war in the Maha Bharat? The nescient say that it was the Pandavas. No, it was Sri Krishna. And Sri Krishna is Srinivasa.

Srinivasa is the Lord with whom Sri is concorporate. Sri is Maha Lakshmi – the Goddess of uberty – physical, metaphysical and spiritual.

To chelas like me Srinivasa is K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar. His very name for us is a salvific mantra. We chant it and stand blessed. Srinivāsaya Mangalam. Om Tat Sat.

8. Atthippattu Krishnaswami Ramanujam's Contribution to the Sankam Literature

I salute the participants of this Seminar.

Let me premise my submission by quoting George Bernard Shaw who said that England and America are the only two countries which are separated by the same language. We do not know when English came to be styled as American in the United States. The process was slow, steady but firm. I cannot descant on this topic in detail. Suffice it for me to bring to your notice the dictionary called 'Concise Dictionary of Current American Usage' by Jerome Shostak, Washington Square Press, 1968.

In my view A.K.R. spoke and wrote in American. His style is simple, direct, terse and apt. He scrupulously avoids what are called poetical words and phrases. His rendition is manly. He hits the nail on the head, yes, on the head of the nail.

A.K.R.'s mother tongue is Tamil. He was brought up in Mysore. As he himself had said, he spoke Tamil at home, Kannada outside his house and English in academic circles. His English became American when he settled in the United States.

Throughout his life, his fascination for Tamil never waned. Yet it but remained in the background. His pursuit of Tamil began to bear fruit when he left India. He came into close contact with foreigners who were scholars of Tamil, or Sanskrit or Indology - Kamil Zvelabil, George Hart, Keith Harrison, Barbara Stoler Miller, James Lindholm, Norman Cuttler, Paula Richman, Robert Tisdale, Edward C. Dimock, Paul Wheatley, Karl

Weintrab, Wendy O'Flaherty, David Grene, Milton Singer, Helen Singer and others. While at Chicago, he rediscovered his mother- tongue. Of this, this is what he observed.

"Even one's own tradition is not one's birthright; it has to be earned, repossessed. The old bards earned it by apprenticing themselves to the masters. One chooses and translates a part of one's past to make it present to oneself and maybe to others. One comes face to face with it sometimes in faraway places, as I did. In 1962, on one of my first Saturdays at the University of Chicago, I entered the basement stacks of the then Harper Library in search of an elementary grammar of Old Tamil, which I have never learned. The University had just acquired a large collection of books from a famous South Indian historian. It was still uncatalogued, even undusted. As I searched, hoping to find a school grammar, I came upon an early anthology of classical Tamil poems, edited in 1937 by U.Ve. Cāminataiyar. It carried his Tamil signature, dated 1937, on its flyleaf. That edition, I later learned, was a landmark in its own right. I sat down on the floor between the stacks and began to browse. To my amazement, I found the prose commentary transparent; it soon unlocked the old poems for me. As I began to read on, I was enthralled by the beauty and subtlety of what I could read. Here was a world, a part of my language and culture, to which I had been an ignorant heir. Until then, I had only heard of the idiot in the Bible who had gone looking for a donkey and had happened upon a kingdom."

Here was a rediscovery fraught with enormous significance. A.K.R. relearnt his language and taught it to the world at large. He initially cultivated with care the Kuruntokai – which according to him is the

Tamilian's Interior Landscape. The traditional fivefold landscape of Tamil Nadu is Exterior Landscape. A.K.R. discovered that within the Exterior lies recondite the Interior.

Among the Sankam classics, it is the Kuruntokai that first beckons the scholar to cultivate it. About 94 years ago, the great patriot V.V.S.Aiyar completed his translation of this work. It was lost during the 1942 disturbance. Nallādai Balakrishna Mudaliyar's 'The Golden Anthology of Tamil Literature' appeared in three volumes in 1959 and 1960. Mudaliyar had translated as many as 51 verses of the Kuruntokai. Eventually his entire translation of the work was published in 2009 by the Bharatidāsan University. A.K.R.'s translation of 76 verses of this work (The Interior Landscape) was published in 1967 by Indiana University, Bloomington. It was reprinted by CLARION Books. A few verses of this work translated by A.K.R. appeared in The East West Review, II, 2 (Winter 1965-66), New Mexico Quarterly, XXXV, 4 (Winter 1965-66), Poetry India, I, 1 (January-March 1966), Prairie Schooner, XXVIII, 2 (Summer 1964), Prison, IV, 3 (Winter 1965) and The Texas Quarterly, VIII, 1 (Spring 1965). Writers Workshop, Calcutta published in 1965 A.K.R.'s 'Fifteen Poems from a Classical Tamil Anthology'. However this slender volume contained only fourteen verses. In 1985 appeared A.K.R.'s 'Poems of Love and War' (Oxford University Press). In this volume is included the translation of 32 Kuruntokai verses.

In M.L. Thangappa's 'Hues and Harmonies from An Ancient Land' are included a translation of a few verses from the Kuruntokai. "Love Stands Alone" by M.L. Thangappa (Penguin India, 2010) contains the translation of many verses from the Kuruntokai. 'Tamil verses in Translation' by P.N. Appuswamy (1987) contains thirty verses of the Kuruntokai.

The first complete translation of the Kuruntokai was done by Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden in 1976 (Koodal Publishers, Madurai). This work stands reprinted.

We should not leave out of account the translation of A.V.Subramanian. His 'Love Lyrics of Long Ago' and 'The Squirrel in the Countryyard' contain many Englished verses from the Kuruntokai. His work 'Love Lyrics of Long Ago' (Department of Tamil Development Culture, 1994) contains the translation of a few verses of the Kuruntokai.

George L. Hart's 'Poets of the Tamil Anthologies' was published in 1979. Forty two Kuruntokai verses are included in this anthology.

The Institute of Asian Studies, Chennai, published its 'Tamil Poetry Through the Ages – Vol.I' in 1992. This volume contains the English translation of 42 Kuruntokai verses by Prof. S.M. Ponniah of Malaysia.

The Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, published its 'Ancient Indian Literature – An Anthology (Vol.III)' in 2000. The compilers have included in this volume 30 verses translated by R. Parthasarathy, K.Ramasamy and T.R.S. Sarma.

'A Gift of Tamil (Translations from Tamil Literature)' edited by Norman Cutler and Paula Richman published by Manohar, American Institute of Indian Studies (1992) contains 15 verses translated by Rahul Bonner and Martha Ann Selby. Oxford University Press published in 2000 Martha Ann Selby's 'Grow Long Blessed Night' which contains 26 verses of the Kuruntokai. Her work 'Circle of Seasons' (Penguin

Books) contains 25 verses from the Kuruntokai. Prof. A. Dakshinamurthy's highly readable and dependable translation of the Kurunthokai was published in 2007.

The dramatis personae of Akam literature are involved in anonymity. Generally the characters are the hero, his confidant, the heroine, her confidante, the mother, the nurse, a minstrel called Pānan and wayfarers. For any scholar unacquainted with the hermaneutics of the Akam literature, the verses appear to be unintelligible. Coming by the meaning of each verse presents problems. A.K.R. introduced his own solution which became popular in no time. A.K.R. simplified the method which enabled the reader to fully understand the role of the participants. Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden openly acknowledge their indebtedness to A.K.R.

A.K.R. did well to emphasise the truth that Tamil, a classical language sui generis, is the only language of contemporary India which is recognizably continuous with a classical past. It is the mother tongue of the Tamils in Tamil Nadu and the other parts of India where the Tamils have settled. So, it is spoken by the Tamils who live in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Burma, parts of Africa, the Fiji Islands, the West Indies and even in England, France, America etc. In his Afterword, A.K.R. supplies almost all the details of information thanks to which the reader is enabled to gain the needed comprehension. He also supplies useful charts. His notes are very enlightening. His Afterword to 'Poems of Love and War' runs to more than 60 pages. His Afterword to 'The Interior Landscape' is in about 20 pages.

As I observed earlier, his translation is not always correct. Verse 38 of the Kuruntokai opens thus:

கான மஞ்ஞை யறையீன் முட்டை
வெயிலொடு முசுவின் குருளை யுருட்டும்
குன்ற நாடன் . . .

A.K.R.'s translation is as follows:

> "He is from those mountains
> Where the little black-faced monkey
> Playing in the sun
> rolls the wild peacock's eggs
> on the rocks."

One should know that it is the peahen and not the peacock that lays eggs. The blunder committed by A.K.R. is repeated by Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden. K. Balakrishna Mudaliyar rightly refers to the peahen. So, too, A.Dakshinamurthy.

Verse 131 speaks of 'ஓர் ஏர் உழவன்'. This phrase is mistranslated by A.K.R., as "a ploughman with a single ox." No doubt the plough is only one. The bulls fastened to it are two. Our Mudaliyar refers rightly to a pair of bulls. Dakshinamurthy too refers to a single plough.

The translation of verse 126 by A.K.R. is incorrect. 'வாரார்' in the context means: "He has not yet come" and not "He will not come." "பெயல் புறம் தந்த பூங்கொடி முல்லை" means "the buds of rain-fed mullai creepers" and not "rain-shadowed creepers" as recorded by A.K.R.

Verse 28 speaks of the agonized heroine who cries: "முட்டுவேன் கொல்?" It means "Should I hit my head against a wall?" However A.K.R. translates it as "Shall I charge like a bull?"

Verse 312 is as follows.

இரண்டறி கள்வி நங் காதலோனே;
முரண் கொடுப்பிற் செவ்வேல் மலையன்

முள்ளூர்க் கானம் நாற வந்து,
நற்ளென் கங்குல் நம் ஓரன்னள்,
கூந்தல் வேய்ந்த விரவு மலர் உதிர்த்துச்
சாந்துளர் நறுங்கதுப்பு எண்ணெய் நீவி
அமரா முகத்தள் ஆகித்
தமர் ஒன்னள் வைகறை யானே.

Malayan is a chieftain. It is a proper name. In his realm is Mullūr. Malayan wields a bloody spear. The heroine has a fragrance about her. During the night she has her tryst with the hero, she has sexual union with him. During the tryst she is all love for her lover. However when the day breaks, she becomes a different woman. She is one among her kin and in their company her love is not a whit revealed. The flowers with which the hero decked her disappear during day. It is indeed two different roles she plays, one during night and the other during day.

The translation of A.K.R. runs thus:

My love is a two-faced thief.
In the dead of night
She comes like the fragrance
of the Red-Speared Chieftain's forest hills,
to be one with me.

And then she sheds the petals
of night's several flowers,
and does her hair again
with new perfumes and oils,
to be one with her family at dawn
with a stranger's different face.

A.K.R.'s translation altogether omits Mullūr. Malayan (a proper name) who wields a bloody spear, is depicted as the Red-Speared Chieftain. Malayan is

Tirumudikkāri. The word கள்வி, in the context means, a cunning woman. It is unfortunate that A.K.R.'s translation does not mirror the original. Again, she is not described as coming like the fragrance of the hills. She who comes is fragrant.

"உயிர் தவச் சிறிது, காமமோ பெரிதே" – Verse 18.

AKR renders this as "her breath is short
and her love great beyond bearing."

This version is misleading. Ludden's rendering: "my friend's life is (so) frail" is correct. The life of the frail girl is freighted with love which is immense. This indeed is the message.

அங்காற் கள்ளி occurring in verse 16 means milkhedges whose bases are pleasing to behold. A.K.R. erroneously renders it as "the clumps of milkhedge with their fragrant trunks.

"எறும்பி அளையிற் குரும் பல் சுனைய" (verse 12) should be translated as "many small springs like anthills." A.K.R.'s version refers to "tunnels in an anthill."

The word இருள் in verse 123 is translated by A.K.R. as night. Darkness, not night, mirrors the original. In the same verse the words இன்னும் வாரார் are translated by A.K.R. as "Our man has not come back." The right translation is: "He is yet to come." In the same verse "வருஉம்" is translated by him as "will return." It should be "are returning."

In verse 221, the poet speaks thus.

"The shepherd who came to the village

With milk, now returns with food." The version of A.K.R. reads thus: "A goat-herd comes into town with goats and milk."

Verse 226 speaks of தாழை which is fragrant screwpine. It is not palmyra as translated by A.K.R.. Again தயங்கு means shining and not slow which is mentioned in A.K.R.'s translation.

I do not desire to multiply the instances of mistranslation.

Now the question that arises is this? Why does A.K.R.'s translation abound in errors? The reason is this. There was none competent to bring the errors to his notice. He did his work in the West. Scholars drilled in Sankam works lived in India. A.K.R.'s translation was meant for the West. He took great efforts to din into the western scholars, the multifoliate splendour of Sankam works. This he did to the best of his ability. This is no mean achievement.

It should also be said to his credit that some of his translated verses are superb. Verse 275 is thus translated by A.K.R.

> "Come, let's go climb on that jasmine-mantled
> rock and look
> if it is only the evening cowbells
> of the grass-fed contented herds
> returning with the bulls
>
> Or the bells of his chariot
> driving back through the wet sand of the
> forest ways,
> his heart full of triumph of a job well done,
> with young archers driving by his side."

"செய்வினை முடித்து செம்மல் உள்ளமொடு" stands translated as "his heart full of the triumph of a job well done." "With the proud satisfaction of having achieved his objective" reads the translation of N.B.Mudaliyar. "With a satisfied heart after having accomplished his mission" is the translation of Dakshinamurthy.

> "பெருநீர்க்
> கல்பொரு சிறு நுரை போல
> மெல்ல மெல்ல இல்லாகுதுமே" (Verse 290)

is translated by A.K.R. as

> "like a streak of foam in high waters
> dashed on the rocks
> little by little I ebb
> and become nothing."

When A.K.R. recites his translation his voice weaves a net of magic into which the listener willingly gets trapped. His is the Siren's song and its ravishment is ineluctable.

9. The Contribution of the realm of Thanjavur to Literature

May Nisumbasūdani, the tutelary deity of Sri Rajaraja, bless us!

Sri Rajaraja was a chakravartti, a sārvabouman and a multifoliate genius – all rolled into one. The lapidary testimonies at Thanjavur and elsewhere attest to Sri Rajaraja's peerless achievements which have secured for our city a significant place in the map of our globe. Truly speaking, it was Sri Rajaraja who established Thanjavur as the cultural capital of the Chola Nādu. Here in Thanjavur flourished art and architecture, music and dance as well as paintings and picturesque sculpture. This wondrous renown of splendour will last so long as we vigilantly foster and safeguard our heritage.

We are celebrating the first millennial year of Rajarajeswaram, more popularly known as the Big Temple of Thanjavur, built by Sri Rajaraja. His contribution to Tamil is immense. Tamil is three fold. Iyal, Isai and Natakam constitute what is celebrated as Mutthamizh.

It was Sri Rajaraja who introduced the genre of Meikkeertthi which is an authentic muniment and historical record of a monarch's achievements.

Isaitthamizh is the grammar of Tamil Music. Thamizh-Isai is the literary composition in music in accordance with the grammar. Sri Rajaraja fostered these both. He re-discovered the Tevāram panns and devised ways and means to preserve and foster the hoary Iyal Thamizh and Isai Thamizh. He appointed *Otuvars* to sing the hymns. He appointed four hundred odd well-trained danseuses to enact the traditional Saiva Āgamic dance. He provided the wherewithal for singers and dancers and also for their progeny to continue their service, without let or hindrance. May we cherish him with gratitude.

The realm of Thanjavur is identified as the Chola country for over a millennium. The region of Tiruchy is also part of the Chola Nādu. However, for the purpose of this paper, I take into consideration the old Chola Nādu, leaving out the realm of Tiruchy.

The realm of Thanjavur which is the Chola Nādu is our blessed inheritance. The Maha Bharata of Vyasa speaks eloquently of the voluntary service rendered by a Chola to the Pāndavas during the Great War. This is also corroborated by our Sankam Literature.

As mny as eighteen bards of the Choa realm had contributed to the corpus of the Puranānūru. I have no time to refer to the other Sankam works. Again, I will mention now, only the names of the Puranānūru bards of the Thanjavur realm. Here follows the list.

1. Āduthurai Māsātthanār,
2. Āvūr Kizhar,
3. Āvūr Mūlangkizhār,
4. Āliyār,
5. Idaikkātanār,
6. Irumpitartthalaiyār,
7. Ulocchanār,
8. Erukkāttār Thayankannanār,
9. Kaviripppōmpattinatthu Kārikkannanār,

10. Kudavāyil Keeratthanār,
11. Kopperum Chozhan,
12. Chozhan Kulamutratthu-th-thunjiya Killi-Valavan,
13. Chozhan Nallurutthiran,
14. Chozhan Nalangkilli,
15. Perumthalai-ch-Chattanār, the son of Āvūr Mūlangkizhar,
16. Pereyil Muruvalār,
17. Vennikkuyatthiyār and
18. Vellaikkudi Nākanār.

Pereyil and Venni are Tevara Sthalams. Now I'll pass on to the divine poets of the Saivite Tirumurais. St.Tirumūlar, it is said, was poised in Siva-yoga and lived for over three millennia. The Bible says that Adam lived during a period which spanned more than 900 years.

Tirumūlar's Tirumantiram is both an opus of Sastra and Stotra. It deals with all the six antas–vedānta, Saiva Siddhanta, Nādānta etc. It is the Tenth Saivite Tirumurai. It is a manual for the practitioners of Siva-yoga. It is in coded language. It has to be decoded and recoded, if possible in modern idiom, by a competent savant well-versed in the Vedas and the Saiva Āgamas which alone will help a lay-person to comprehend, at least, an outline of the opus. Tirumūlar performed his tapas under a peepal tree in Tiruvāvaduthurai. His work is in 3,000 verses. Two English versions of this work are available.

St. Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār, also known as Peyār, is the author of two patikams (decads) known as the

Tiruvālangkāttu Mūttha Tiruppatikam and the Mūttha Tiruppatikam. She also authored Tiru Irattai Mani Mālai and the Arputhatthiruvantāti. G.U.Pope says Antāti is anaphoretic verse. Her verses are cast in Tamil *panns.* She is the first one to mention a number of musical instruments in her works. She is eke the first one to introduce the genre of Antāti to religious literature. The paradigm of patikam set by her became popular during the time of the Tevāram Trio. The total number of her verses and those of St.Āndāl's are the same. It was my good fortune to first present her verses in English translation. Karaikkāl, a port, was formerly a part of the Chola Nādu.

St. Tirugnānasambandhar is the acknowledged Saiva Guru par excellence. He made his avatar in Seekāzhi. The Tevāram Trio revived Saivism and re-established it on a firm footing. Sambandhar sang the alien faiths away from the Tamil Nādu. As a creative poet, his innovations enriched Tamil. Many new genres were added to Tamil poesy by him. Mālai Mātru (palindronic verses), Tiruvezhukūttrirukkai (a form of pictoial versification), Ekapātam (a quatrain whose first line is reiterated in the other three lines, though the meanings differ), Tiruththālacchathi (verses of singular rhythm and time) and the like were the innovations of St. Sambandhar. He is hailed as the youngest composer in the whole world by Prof. Sāmbamūrthy Iyer. The first three Tirumurais constitute Sambandhar's works. My English translation of the first Tirumurai appeared in 2012.

Though St. Sundarar was born in Tirunāvalūr, he settled in Tiruvārūr. He is known as Ārūran. God-Siva conferred on him His friendship. He is known as Tambiran Thozhar. He is the author of the

Tirutthondatthokai. The magnificent edifice of the Periya Puranam is structured on this Tokai. The love and devotion of Sri Rajaraja for St.Sundarar knew no bounds. Sri Rajaraja's paintings relating to a few episodes of Sundarar' life, I daresay, had inspired my deity St.Sekkizhaar, to describe, in minute detail, a few incidents of Sundarar's life, with telling effect.

Kandarātitthar is one of the authors of the Tiruvisaippa which along with Tiruppallāndu constitutes the Ninth Saiva Tirumurai. He is the elder brother of Sri Rajaraja's grandfather.

Pūnthurutthi Nambi Kata Nambi, Tiruvāli Amuthanār and Centanār are also the composers of some of the hymns of the Ninth Tirumurai. Pūnthurutthi is Tiruppūnthurutthi near Kandiyūr. Tiruvāli is near Seekāzhi. It is also associated with Tirumankai Azhawar. Tirunānkūr is the birth-place of Centanar.

Nambi Āndar Nambi's works are ten in number which are included in the Eleventh Tirumurai. He was born in Tirunāraiyūr. His work Tirutthondar-Tiruvantati is one of the sources of the Periya Puranam.

Fourteen are the Meykanta Sastras. Of these the first two works, namely the Tiruvuntiyar and the Tirukkalitruppadiyar were indited respectively by Tiruviyalur Uyyavanta Deva Nāyanār and Tirukkadavūr Uyyavanta Deva Nāyanār. The second work is a verse commentary on the first opus. These two works deal with the yoga-pāda of the Saiva Āgamas.

Tondar Adi-p-Podi Āzhwar hails from Tirumandangkudi. He is the author of the Tirumālai and the Tiruppalliezhucchi which form part of the Divya-p-prabandam.

Tirumangkai Azhwar hailed from Tiruvāli. He is the author of six works, namely the Periya Tirumozhi, the Tirukkurunthāndakam, the Tirunedumthāndakam, the Tiruvezhukūttrirukkai, the Siriya Tirumatal and the Periya Tirumatal. His reverence for Siva is boundless. His description of *Siva-Thandavam* in the Periya Tirumatal is breath-taking.

Of the Vaishnavite commentators, Periyavācchān Pillai is the only one who has commented on the entire Divya-p-prabandam. He hails from Seignalūr – the modern Senganūr near Tiruppanandal. Seignalūr (Seinalūr) is the town where Chandeesa Nayanar made his avatar.

The great poet Kambar was born in Tiruvazhundūr, now known as Terazhundūr. There are two famous shrines in this town. One is Siva's and the other is Vishnu's. It should be mentioned here that Sri Rajaraja had made an endowment for the Vishnu's temple.

Kambar is the author of the Rāmayana in Tamil. It is a peerless epic of great grandeur. Many Rāmayanas existed in Tamil before Kambar. These stand totally eclipsed by the Kamba Rāmayanam. To appreciate, at least, a modicum of Kambar's epic, one must cultivate with devotion V.V.S. Aiyar's work entitled "Kamba Rāmayana: A Study." Aiyar wrote his work in the Bellari jail where he was incarcerated for a few months, for the alleged crime of sedition. Two doctoral theses appeared in print comparing Kambar with John Milton. The entire work of Kambar was translated into English by Prof.Sundaram. The Tamil University printed it. The publisher is the Department of Tamil Development, Chennai.

Ottakkūtthar was a native of Kūtthanūr in the local shrine of which goddess Saraswati's idol was installed by him. He lived during the reign of three Chola Kings who were celebrated by him in his work called Mūvar Ulā. His work called Takkayakapparani is a famous, martial and majestic poem which is fraught with rheotorical excellence. Grandiloquence is his forte. It is said that he is the author of the Utthara Kāndam, the concluding part of the Rāmayana.

Jayamkondar of Deepangkudi which is near Kudavāyil, is an eminent poet. His 'Kalingkatthu-p-parani' celebrates the victory of Kulotthungka Chola the First, over the sovereign of the Kalingka Nādu. The triumphant warriors of the Chola, on their return, were obliged to serenade to appease the wrath of their respective wives who had suffered for long the pangs of angst and agony resulting from protracted separation. The serenading verses testify to their severe bouderie. An imitation, paraphrasal in nature, of one of the serenade-verses by Pudumai-p-pitthan enjoys a well-merited popularity.

There were three Pattinatthārs. The last of them hailed from Pūmpukar. He, an opulent merchant, on a sudden, renounced his worldly life and became a wandering mendicant. His verses stand etched in the hearts of the Tamils. His emphasis was on the instability of world's grandeur. He gave up all attachment; yet his love and devotion for his mother remained intact. He sang bone-melting verses when he performed the obsequies of his mother. I had to wipe my tears every now and then before I could complete my translation of these verses.

Goddess Uma is the Magna Mater. She is also hailed as Abirāmi. Her idol stands installed in Tirukkadavūr. It is the native town of Abirāmi Bhattar. He was a Sākta of matchless fame and the verses of his work "Abirami Antāti" are even today sung in most of the houses in Tamil Nādu. We can, with aplomb, asseverate that this Antāti is a verse commentary in Tamil on the Lalita Sahasranama, packed with melting love doubled with devotion. This work stands translated into many languages, including the Malaysian language.

Nannilam Thandavaraya Swami is the author of Kaivalya Navanitam – an excellent manual of Sankara Advaitam. There are ten commentaries on this work. It was translated into Sanskrit by Sanku Kavi. Charles Graul, the translator of Sivagnana Siddhiyar, translated into English this work and it was published simultaneously in London and Leipzig in 1855. When he wrote to Max Muller that he was engaged in this English translation, the latter wrote back to say that he should append to his work an Outline of Tamil Grammar. This he did and the Outline runs to a 100 pages. Modern grammarians of Tamil should cultivate this Outline with care and devotion. Kaivalya Navanitam was also translated into German by Charles Graul – the translator of Tirukkural into Latin. A modern French translation of Kaivalya Navanitam is available in the Library of Ramanāsramam at Tiruvannāmalai. I have reprinted the English translation of Charles Graul in 1995.

Amrutasākarar, the author of Yapperungkalakkārikai was a grammarian of superior order. He belonged to the Jayamkonda Chola Mandalam. He flourished about a millennium ago. His is a popular work. It stands translated into English.

Kāzhi Thāndavarāyar indited an extraordinary commentary on the Tiruvāchakam. His interpretation is out and out Saiva Siddhantic. This work was published in two parts, the first part dealing with the first four poems of the Tiruvāchakam and the second with the rest of the work. Incidentally this commentary brings to light the arcanic message of the Tirukkovaiyār also.

Kottaiyūr Sivakkozhuntu Desikar was a great Tamil poet and teacher. He flourished during the reign of Serfoji II. He was also attached to the Chennai Kalvikkazhakam. His major works were published by Dr.U.Ve.Saminatha Iyer. Desikar was the first to print the Tiruvachakam. The work appeared in January-February of 1835.

Maha Vidwan Meenākshisundaram Pillai belonged to Tiruchy. Yet he spent the best part of his life as the Ādheena Vidwan of Tiruvāvaduthurai Ādheenam. He indited very many works, chiefly Sthala Puranas. U.Ve.Saminatha Iyer published in 1910, forty of his works under the name and style of "Tiruvāvaduthurai Ādheenatthu Maha Vidwan Tirusirapuram Sri Meenākshisundaram Pillai Averkall Prabandatthirattu."

Innumerable were the chelas of the Maha Vidwan. I will but mention only two of them, they being Vidwan Thiagaraja Chettiyār and U.Ve.Sāminatha Iyer. The Maha Vidwan lives in our memory not through his works, but through his biography written in two parts by U.Ve.Sāminatha Iyer. Modern Tamil scholars, I mean, almost all of them, keep themselves distanced from the Maha Vidwan. This is to be regretted. The Tamil University should take steps to reprint the prabandams of the Maha Vidwan and encourage scholars to cultivate him.

Vidwan Thiagaraja Chettiyar, the author of a few remarkable works, saw to it that U.Ve.Sāminatha Iyer became his successor as Professor of Tamil, of Govt. Arts College, Kumbakonam.

The World of Tamil is sempiternally indebted to U.Ve.Sāminatha Iyer. But for him many Sankam Classics and other rare works would have vamoosed totally. He was a pioneer editor. His retentive power was God-given. He was a tireless searcher as well as researcher. He travelled extensively in search of palm-leaf manuscripts. He came by a good many of them, preserved them and put them to the best use. He worked round the clock and yet remained ever-fresh. His devotion for his guru is unexampled. He was a sweet-voiced singer who was well-versed in musicology. He received the Saiva Āgamic Diksha and punctiliously performed his quotidian puja and rituals. His knowledge of the Saivite Tirumurais and Meykanta Sastras was immense. He was honest to the core. Pretension was unknown to him. When an unusually difficult vocable in a script baffled him he confessed his inability to comprehend it. Like Leigh Hunt I affirm: "May his tribe increase."

Mayavaram Munsif Vedanayakam Pillai was a scribe of prose as well as verse. He wrote on many subjects. His contribution to Tamil is sizeable.

Pinnatthūr Narayanaswami Iyer, Kalitthokai Anandarama Iyer and Nadukkāveri Venkatasāmi Nattār were great commentators. Thanjavur Srinivasam Pillai – a lawyer –, is remembered for his History of Tamil Literature, a pioneer work, authentic and therefore laudable. Umamaheswaram Pillai was associated with the founding of the Karantai Tamil Sankam. Its official journal Tamizh-p-pozhil even today serves the Tamil community.

Vedachalam of Nākai eventually emerged as Maraimalai Atikall. He was well versed in Tamil, Sanskrit and English. He was devoted to Saivism. He was an able polemist. He authored many valuable books and tracts.

Tiruvārur V. Kaliyanasundara Mudaliyār was a savant of Tamil. He was a great humanitarian. He was thoroughly honest, noble and pious. He was a master of Tamil prose and poesy. He worked hard for the upliftment of Tamil and the Tamils.

P.V. Abdul Gaffoor of Tiruvaiyaru was a born-Chitra Kavi. He was also an Āsukavi admired for his impromptu versification. He was held in great admiration by U.Ve.Sāminātha Iyer, R.Raghava Iyengar, Venkatasami Nāttar, Maraimalai Atikal, Tirunārayana Iyengar and a host of eminent scholars. The Tamil University will do well to take steps, to nationalize his works.

Singers of occasional verses in Tamil are legion. I appeal to you all to peruse with care the four volumes of Tanippātal Tirattu published by the Kazhakam.

Sundaresa Vāndayar, a middle school teacher, was a Vidwan and a painstaking researcher of archaeology. Sadasiva Pandāratthar, a high school teacher was also a great researcher of archaeology. He eventually worked in the Department of Research, Annamalai University.

From the realm of Thanjavur emerged very many musical composers, musicians and musicologists. Mututthāndavar, Mārimuttha Pillai, Arunchala Kavirāyar, Anantha Kavirāyar, Anantha Krishna Bharati, Shahaji, Thiaga Brahmam, Mutthuswami Dikshitar, Shyama Sastry, Gopalakrishna Bharati, The Thanjai Nālvar, Ūtthukkādu Venkatasubramaniya Iyer, Vaiyaccheri Ramaswami Sivam, the great Abraham Panditar whose monumental work is the Karnamrutha Sākaram, and many others.

Palliagraharam N. Kandasamy Pillai was a fully-fledged scholar of Tamil, very well versed in English. His personal library was the envy of scholars. He was born in 1898. He was friends with the great scholars of his time. He was closely associated with Vedaraniyam V.V.Ramana Sastry – a polyphiloprogenetive polymath.

Pillai could never suffer fools gladly. He was dreaded by pseudo-scholars. He was the first to attempt a linguistic translation of the Natrinai. He completed it half a century ago. However the work appeared in print only in 2008.

When Jawaharlal Nehru visited the French Institute of Indology at Pondicherry where Pillai was working in the Department of Tamil Research, Pillai had a confabulation with Nehru and in a few minutes, dinned into Nehru the multifoliate grandeur of Tamil. Nehru left the Institute a wiser man.

Pillai served as the Secretary of the Saraswati Mahal Library and went out of the way to reprint the English translation of Viramāmunivar's Grammar of Sen Tamizh as well as "Grammar of Kodum Tamizh" indited by the Munivar in Latin.

Pillai owned a publishing house called The House of Knowledge. Through it he published in 1933 "The Golden Book of English Poetry" for the junior students and another book of the same name for senior students. These two books are a pair of excellent anthologies.

Many of his articles appeared in the journal Tamizh-p-Pozhil. His translation in Tamil verse of

Thomas Gray's Elegy was published in 1961. This work is a classic. It merits re-printing. Pillai's "Index des mots de la tamoule" appeared in three volumes. This compilation is a significant one. He was closely associated with the great publisher of error-free classics, the late-lamented Murray S. Rajam. Pillai passed away in 1977. T.V. Gopala Iyer and I called on him when he was hospitalized. Till the last moment his mind was alert and he was able to sing in his soft and melodious voice the Tevāram and the Tiruvāchakam hymns.

Nallādai Balakrishna Mudaliyār was born on 26 June 1903. He secured his B.A. degree in 1923. He could not finish his post-graduate study. Mudaliyār is a pioneer in the field of translation. His work "The Golden Anthology of Ancient Tamil Literature" was published in three volumes by the Kazhakam. It was reprinted in one volume in 2004. George L. Hart showered unreserved encomia on Mudaliyār's translation.

Barring the Tirukkurall and the Nāladiyār, he has translated the other sixteen works of the Patinenn Keezhkkanakku into readable and dependable English prose. I openly pay my obeisance to the great Mudaliyār. His translations, ere long, will see the light of day.

The Bharathidāsan University did well to publish his translation of the Kuruntokai last year. I have undertaken the publication of his translation of Bharati's Kuyil Pāttu and a few verses of Bharathidāsan.

Dr. M. Arunachalam was a prolific writer. He was well versed in Tamil, Sanskrit and English. He was born in 1909. Many are the works indited by him. Industrious, systematic and methodic, he elbowed his way to the forefront and served as a model for emulation. He was at home with the Saiva Agamas. His translation and explication of the Saiva Agamas runs to a myriad pages. In a year or two, they will see the light of day. He served as a lecturer in the Benares Hindu University and the Annamalai University. He was also the founder of a few educational institutions. His personal library housed rare and valuable works in three languages, besides cadjan leaf manuscripts, a good many. He was awarded the Doctorate Degree by the Tamil University. His Tamil Ilakkiya Varalaru, Tamizh Isai Ilakkiya Varalāru and Tamizh Isai Ilakkana Varalaru are monumental works. He was a cognoscente of Saiva Tirumurais as well as Sastras. He has authored more than 120 works.

Pāvalar Balasundaram of Thanjavur is a poet sui generis. He revolutionized the approach to the Tolkāppiyam. His hermeneutics is his own innovation. His interpretations are too ahead of his and our days. He is an etymologist of a very high order. He is our Ivor Brown. T.V.Gopala Iyer was an admirer and a true friend of the Pavalar. He passed away within months after the demise of Iyer.

T.V.Gopala Iyer was a Pandita Vidwan. Those were days when the Madurai Tamil Sankam conducted the Pandita Pariksha. Rarely did a scholar pass this test. The result of the exmination was usually announced thus: "அறுவர் சென்றனர்; ஒருவரும் தேறிலர்"(Six appeared and none passed).

Iyer sat for this examination and snatched the first prize.

Iyer studied in the English medium High school. He passed the English course prescribed for the Intermediate. He knew by rote Goldsmith's The Deserted Village. His knowledge of English was impeccable.

All the younger brothers of Iyer are great scholars. His youngest brother T.V.Panchapakesan is a world-renowned mathematician. He taught for many years at a University in Venezuela. His latest work is "The Bartle-Dunford-Schwartz Integral." This research work secured for him global fame.

Iyer was well versed in Jainism. Mr.James D. Ryan has translated the Civaka Cintamani. The first part contains verses 1 to 1,165. Mr. Ryan says that Iyer helped him at each and every stage and Iyer indeed is a co-trasnlator who choses to remain anonymous.

Iyer is an adept in Vaishnavism. His translation in chaste Tamil of Periyavācchan Pillai's Manipravala commentary on the six opuses of Tirumangkai Āzhwar stands published in three volumes.

Iyer compiled and edited the French Institute publication of the seven Tirumurais. The work is in two volumes. The third volume by Iyer contains a mine of information relating to all the seven Tirumurais.

Iyer's works on the Tolkappiyam, the Ilakkana Vilakkam, the Ilakkanakkotthu and the Prayoka Vivekam are classics. These are proof against the tooth of Time and razure of oblivion. In the field of Tamil Literature Iyer stands first. Like Macaulay he read everything and forgot nothing.

I will now briefly dwell on the multi-dimensional greatness of Tiruvaiyaru Lokanatha Iyer Sitaram, popularly known as Tiruloka Sitaram. He was and still is my mentor. He was born on the first day of April, 1917. He passed away on 23 August 1973. He was the greatest poet after Bharati and Bharathidāsan. Bharathidāsan loved him, admired him and encouraged him. He had also sung on him.

Tiruloka Sitaram is a metaphysical poet par excellence. I have translated almost all his poems into English. His magnum opus is Gandarva Ganam. The text and my English translation will be published in a few weeks.

Tirulokam is a Telugu-born Tamil poet. He knew the complete poetical works of Bharati by rote. He was born with a prodigious retentive power.

He is the translator of Hesse's Siddharta into Tamil. He is also the Tamil translator of Manu Dharma Sastra. He was a journalist throughtout his career.

His poetic diction is his own. Of his Gandarva Gānam I have observed thus. "Gandarva Gānam is the magnum opus of Tiruloka Sitaram. It is the outcome of sheer ecstasy. Our poet has received this great ecstasy with a thousand tentacles of awareness taking possession of what cannot be possessed by means and methods not to be comprehended even by superior intellects. Poetry which according to him is beauty's rich sweetness distilled from charmed words of mellow mellifluousness, is seen here at its plenitude."

His Ghandarva Gānam opens thus:

A spring of Joy soul-surgent
A bloomed pavilion of ember-passion
An alchemy of essences - Ghandarva Gānam!
She bade me sing! praise be!

Well friends, I hail him as the Tenth Muse. I study him constantly and the guerdon I come by is a wonder of splendour.

Lofty as well as profound, local as well as para-local and universal, plain and simple as well as nice and subtle, ancient as well as modern, secular, religious, metaphysical, philosophical, spiritual and mystical are indeed the contributions of the realm of Thanjavur to the world of the threefold Tamil. Let us strive to foster this aristocracy in our Republic of Letters.

10. The contemporary relevance of the Tiruvāchakam

When the British ruled over India, they prevented the Indians from bringing out in print, their vernacular works. However the Christian missionaries were free to print and publish their works in all the tongues of India. Moreover almost all the printing presses were owned and operated by the missionaries. This was the sad state of affairs between 1823 and 1835.

Sir Charles Metcalfe, an eminent British administrator, was shocked by such a state of affairs. He very much desired to lift the statutory ban and enable the citizens of India to print and publish their works in their mother-tongues. He was able to secure the much-needed help from Lord Macaulay. When Metcalfe became the Acting Governor-General of India, he had the Press Act duly amended as a result of which the sons of Bharat were vested with the right to print their vernacular works.

The Amendment to the Press Act came into effect by about the middle of 1835.

Sivakkozhuntu Desikar – an eminent Tamil poet and scholar –, was a member of the staff of the Chennai-k-Kalvicchankam founded by the Government to train the Tamils who could eventually be recruited for Government service. This Sankam, known as the Madras College, was permitted to print such books as were necessary for their curricula. Sivak-k-Kozhuntu Desikar was afire with an ardent desire to print the text of the Tiruvāchakam. Perhaps well-aware of the contemplated Amendment to the Press Act, he went about his work, full tilt, and succeeded in bringing out the first printing of the text of the Tiruvāchakam during the month of Thai, of the year Jaya, corresponding to January-February of 1835. Desikar's text was indeed the one which formed the basis of the many of the later editions. The Eighth Tirumurai, it is well known, comprises the two works of St.Mānickavāchakar, namely (1) the Tiruvāchakam and (2) the Tirukkovaiyār. Nayanappa Mudaliyār of Pondicherry was one of the teachers of the Madras College. It was he who brought out in print the Tirukkovaiyār in 1842. The significant fact is this. Of the twelve Saivite Tirumurais, it was the Eighth that first appeared in print. Was this a divine coincidence? I do not know. The fact remains that it was the Eighth Tirumurai that came out first in print. This speaks volumes of the multifoliate greatness of our Saint Mānickavāchakar. I crave your leave to submit here that Lord Siva in His infinite mercy, has made me the only person that has translated the Eighth Tirumurai, in its entirety.

Friends, who do you think was the first foreigner to mention in his work the Tiruvāchakam? It was Barthelomeus Ziegenbalg – the first Protestant missionary to India. He completed his German opus on the Geneology of the South Indian Gods on 21 May 1713. An English translation of this work appeared in 1869. It was reprinted in 1984. According to Ziegenbalg, four were the works which were dear to the Saivites during his time, they being (1) the Tevāram, (2) the Tiruvāchakam, (3) the Sivagnana Bhotham and (4) the Sivakavacham.

The *introduction* prefixed to my translation of the Tiruvāchakam, I daresay, will reward your perusal. I feel legitimately proud of my translation of the Tiruvāchakam and I confess that I took more time to indite the Introduction than even to translate the Tiruvāchakam. About 450 references from books, indited mainly in English, pointing to the grandeur and glory of the Tiruvāchakam, form part of the Introduction. Such references and in such abundance, are not to be met with, so far, in any work pertaining to the Tiruvāchakam. I say this, not out of arrogance at all. It is but a recordation of my exultation.

I but think that I do well to administer a word of caution to my reader. Spiritual writing, be it known, differs from other types of writings. Not many have understood the true greatness of our Saint. Some of his utterances, which to a modern mind, appear to be a confession of guilt, have misled many. The following observation from Kahlil Gibran's 'Sand and Foam' demands mulling over and over again. Says Gibran: "How often have I attributed to myself crimes I have never committed, so that the other person may feel comfortable in my presence."

A type of spiritual punctilio characterizes certain saints. At times they are prone to be pernickety. Their peccadilloes are viewed by them as obnoxious and unpardonable sins. They inculpate themselves of crimes, offences and sins which they had not at all committed. They were what we are not. Our Saint Mānickavāchakar in reviewing his thoughts and deeds, played the role of rigid and unsympathetic precisian and condemned himself where condemnation was not called for. The only faults of our Saint were a too sensitive delicacy and a modesty which amounted to shame-ridden bashfulness. In Ennappatikam [44], in which four verses are missing, this is what he says of himself.

"I have ceased to behold Your sacred feet; my eyes
No longer rejoice as they were accustomed to;
I have ceased to cherish and praise You; as a result,
O Our God! O Tānu! I am done for.
By my baseness I have forfeited my nature
Of thinking on You and melting.
I see not aught that is good. Even if You
Come to me, I will blush to behold You."

We, of the infirm and erring race, seldom melt in devotion. Our Saint seldom desisted from melting. While we never blush for our gravest omission, our Saint cannot but blush for his slightest omission.

The Tiruvāchakam is the spiritual biography of St. Mānickavāchakar. His worldly existence beset with lures galore, his natural propensity to Godliness, his glimpsing Siva, the consequential bliss in which he was immersed, his feeling guilty for his alleged relapse into worldliness, his determined efforts to combat the trials and tribulations of phenomenal life, his enervation for the nonce, his experience of ennui, his death-wish, his recovery from excruciating and mortal agony, his gradual progress and his ultimate victory are portrayed in such divinely vivid and graphic detail that the reader is persuaded to think that he too is a co-pilgrim with our Saint. The earnest reader feels that every letter, syllable, word or phrase of this unique opus is loaded with extraordinary significance. The work communicates itself at various levels and each reader is enabled to come by a measure of fulfilment commensurate with his competency. This work is not to be comprehended by tuition but by intuition.

It is my humble view that a Tamil work which exercises a palpable influence on a foreigner, is for ever relevant. Sir Charles Eliot was an acknowledged cognoscente of Hinduism and Buddhism. His three volumes on these two faiths merit no mean accolade. The following excerpts from his work relate to the Tiruvāchakam.

"The Saivism of the Tamil country is one of the most energetic and progressive forms of modern Hinduism, but in doctrine it hardly varies from the ancient standard of the Tiruvācagam" – Vol.1, p.46.

"The Ramayana of Tulsidas and the Tiruvācagam are extolled by Groase, Grierson and Pope (all of them Christians, I believe), as not only masterpieces of literature but as noble expressions of pure devotion ..." – Ibid.,p.xc.

"Of the other works comprised in the Tirumurai, the most important is the Tiruvācagam of Mānickavacagar, one of the finest of devotional poems which India can show. It is not like the Bhagawat-Gita, an exposition by the deity, but an outpouring of the soul to the deity." – Vol.2, p.215.

"The remarkable feature of this religion, best-seen in the Tiruvacagam is the personal tie which connects the soul with God. In no literature with which I am acquainted, has the individual life – its struggle and dejection, its hopes and fears, its confidence and its triumph – received a delineation more frank and more profound."

"Among the many beauties of the Tiruvacagam is one which reminds us of the works of St. Francis and other Christian poetry, namely, the love and nature of animals especially birds and insects. There are constant allusions to plants and flowers: the refrain of one poem calls on a dragon-fly to sing the praises of God, and another bids the bird known as Kuyil call him to come. In another Ode, the poet says, he looks for the grace of God like a patient heron watching night and day." – Ibid., p.217.

Friends, our Saint's reverence for life knows no bounds. He knows that all forms of manifestation in creation have their source in God. *Isavasyam idam sarvam Yatkincha jagatyam jagat.* No wonder our Vedas pray for the welfare of all creatures, animate as well as inanimate. Trees and plants, grass and creepers too are divine.

Animals and birds serve as mounts (Vahanas) of our Gods and Goddesses. Plants and trees and grass and creepers are sacred, whether they are *sthala-vrukshas* or not. Animals are not to be hunted without cause. Fauna and flora are bound to the human race in a benign symbiosis. It is a mystic kinship that informs each particle of the cosmos.

The verses of the Tiruvāchakam are radiantly autochthonous and bracingly modern. Our Saint, thanks to the grace of Grace, emerged as an authentic poet of mysticism by his willing submission to the compelling rhythm of a larger life. He was able to push back the barricades besetting and fettering the self and gain the untainted and unselfish love of God. He preached it and practised it. His incandescent and piercing intellect burnt all dichotomies away. He was at home with all beings as well as things. He sang of gods, Asuras, men and animals like the cow, the bull, the lion, the tiger, the goat, the boar, the deer, the horse and the like. He also sang of the aquatic creatures, namely, the carp, the *cale* fish, the *keliru* (cat-fish), the shark, the sword-fish, the crocodile etc. Again, he celebrated in verse trees, plants, creepers, grass and the like. Sandalwood, eaglewood, banyan, the white fig-tree, mango, *kinchukam, kuruntu* (wild lime), vetchi, cotton, sugar-cane, millet, *surai* (bottle gourd), *kovvai, parāi* (the paper-tree) and the like and also flowers like lotus, lily and *kazhuneer*. The grass too was sacred to him. He did not ignore the snake or the earth-worm. Even poison does not incur his odium. He quotes a time-honoured adage and says: "If a tree reared by one, happens to be a poisonous one, one will not fell it." (தாம் வளர்த்ததோர் நச்சு மாமரமாயினும் கொலார் ...).

Our Saint flourished during the ninth century. Mahakavi Subramaniya Bharati who came upon the scene eleven centuries later was an ardent admirer of our Saint. He wrote in two instalments a story entitled: "Pey-k-Koottam." One night Bharati was bundled up by a few men and carried to a crematory. A hundred burning brands were held by a hundred virgins. On a sudden these lasses began to sing. Bharati describes the singing thus: "தேவகானம்; அமிர்த வர்ஷம்; இன்னிசைக் கடல்; இன்பக் காட்டுத்தீ." [Ethereal music; rain of nectar, an ocean of melodious music, a sylvan flame raging sweet.] The damsels enchantingly intoned a verse from the Tiruvāchakam. It began with the words: "நெறி அல்லா நெறி தன்னை ..." The damozels used the words: ஆர்பெறுவார் அச்சோவே! as pallavi (refrain) and singing thus, began to dance. Bharati celebrates their dance in these words: "சக்தி நாடகம், விஷ்ணுவின் சித்தலோகம், கண்ணன் கண்ட கனா!" [It is Sakti's play, the Siddha-loka of Vishnu, the dream that Kannan dreamt!] The impact of the Tiruvāchakam verse on Bharati is felt in every syllable that he uttered so ecstatically. Bharati – the ardent adorer of St.Mānickavāchakar –, was obviously influenced by our Saint's pronouncement which runs thus:

பாடி மால் புகழும் பாதமே யல்லால்
பற்று நான் மற்றிலேன் கணடாய் ...

I thought fit to place before you the nectarean outburst of Bharati only to show how our Saint, a mystic poet par excellence, has, after a passage of about 1,100 years, impacted so modern a poet like Bharati. If this indeed be the truth, should I any further expatiate on the contemporaneity as well as the relevance of the Tiruvāchakam.

Bharati comes in the sacred line of the Saivite Four. He is even closer to St.Mānickavachakar in his world-view perception. In a humble way, he shares the vision of our Saint. Everything that Bharati beheld was nothing but "the ardent self-expression of that immanent Being," a *lila,* a musical manifestation of creative joy. *Kaakkai* and *Kuruvi* (Raven and Sparrow), "the scuttering insects, the soft populations of the grass," *Katal* and *Malai* (Main and Mountain) and all beings and things – animate as well as inanimate –, were his comrades and his intense love asserted itself in the most suasive way in every one of his verses. To read the verses of Bharati and those of our Saint's is to feel the beatings of a benign heart, the upleap of a beatific joy – greater, vaster and richer than anything one has known. By cultivating their verses, the aspirant, will sooner or later, discover his fraternal link with all things; he will, by and by, perceive in the Many the clear and palpable presence of the One: "the changeless and absolute Life, manifesting itself in all the myriad, nascent, crescent, cadent lives."

Friends, one must love and revere Nature which according to Tennyson is "God's Deputy." These are times when we are forced to witness the rape of Nature by man. Did not Wordsworth bemoan thus: "Little do we see in nature that is ours." Alas, man has turned into a tyrant and despot. As observed by Dr.Michael W.Fox (Director, Centre for Respect of Life and Environment, Washington), "... we find our inhumanity toward our own kind is matched only by our disrespect for the whole creation, by the desecration of the natural world, by the accelerating extinction of plant and animal species, and by institutionalized forms of cruel and unnecessary exploitation." Did not the poet burst out thus: "And much it grieved my heart to see What man has made of man." Sanctity of life and respect for harmonious living stand imperilled. Alas, when will we learn to live as human beings?

The Tiruvāchakam presents a world-view or *Gestalt* that is as basically and ineluctably holistic as it is non-dualistic. It dins into us panentheism which leads to the apperception of the essential unity between Pati and Pasu – Creator and Creation. When both spiritual and physical ecology stand endangered, it behooves us to proclaim from our house-tops the sacred message of the Tiruvāchakam which is love, more love and ever-increasing love.

The Hindu faith – be it Saivism or Vaishnavism –, inculcates reverence for life. As G.Naganathan righly observes, it is "Judaic monotheism (which) opened for the first time the floodgates to deliberate, wholesale despoliation of Nature."

Nature is Lord Siva's creation. The Creator indwells His creation. We should revere and foster Nature. It is in this context that the concept of Ashta-Murti which is hailed by the Tiruvāchakam, becomes all-important. Siva's form, in His Ashta-Murti aspect, comprises the five elements, the sun, the moon and the soul. All these partake of Godliness. Our Saint hails Siva thus:

பாரிடை ஐந்தாய்ப் பரந்தாய், போற்றி!
நீரிடை நான்காய் நிகழ்ந்தாய், போற்றி!

தீயிடை மூன்றாய்த் திகழ்ந்தாய், போற்றி!
வளியிடை இரண்டாய் மகிழ்ந்தாய், போற்றி!
வெளியிடை ஒன்றாய் விளைந்தாய், போற்றி!

[You pervade the earth and endue it with virtues
five, praise be!
The water with virtues four, praise be!
The fire with virtues three, prasie be!
The wind with virtues two, praise be!
The ether with a single virtue, praise be!]

The greatness of the elements occurs earlier in the Tiruvāchakam.

... ... நாள்தொறும்
அருக்கனில் சோதி அமைத்தோன்; திருத்தகு
மதியில் தண்மை வைத்தோன்; திண்திறல்
தீயில் வெம்மை செய்தோன்; பொய் தீர்
வானில் கலப்பு வைத்தோன்; மேதகு
காலில் ஊக்கம் கண்டோன்; நிழல் திகழ்
நீரில் இன்சுவை நிகழ்ந்தோன்; வெளிப்பட
மண்ணில் திண்மை வைத்தோன் ... ...

[He is the One that confers
On the sun its diurnal effulgence,
On the sacred moon its coolth,
On the puissant fire its heat,
On the ether pure its pervasiveness,
On the glorious wind its force,
On the sparkling water its sweetness
On the earth its palpable hardness . . .]

It is a truism to say that we depend on the five great elements at all times. Are they not sacred and sacrosanct? Can we repeatedly puncture the ozone layer and yet hope to live gleefully? Can we pollute the air and yet hope to escape pulmonary affliction? Can we misuse and abuse fire and hope to escape from the dire consequences? Can we suffer water to be contaminated and yet live hygienically? Can we endlessly drill into the bowels of the earth and still hope to rear thereon our homes? Alas, what is it that we are doing? We but wage a relentless and ubiquitous war against Godhead at all times. The Tiruvāchakam repeatedly dins into us that God indwells every atom, every sub-atom and every sub-sub-atom.

> எனைப் பல கோடி, எனைப் பல பிறவும்
> அனைத்து, அனைத்து, அவ்வயின் அடைத்தோன்
> [Thus, even thus, He packed into each
>
> Of the billions and billions of things its virtue.]

The omnipresent God pervades human and non-human creation alike. The phrase *hiranya-garbha* (the cosmic egg), is an indefeasible indicant of the essential unity of all life and the non-dualistic nature of reality. The life-environment continuum is implied in the Buddhist terminology *esho-funi.* It is said that Albert Einstein derived his unification theory from this realization. The universe is sustained by a divine harmony which must be fostered by all. So, violence and violation ought not to enter the realm of life – animate or inanimate. An ant has as much right to live and thrive as man. The least act of violence ushers in imbalance. Listen to the admonition of William Blake: "A robin red-breast in a cage Puts all heaven in a rage." We must play the role of preservers and not destroyers. We must turn into committed conservationalists, ardent animal-protectionists, enlightened educators and pious propagators of peace to bring about a *metanoia,* a change in the attitude toward the non-human creation. The Tiruvāchakam is indeed the blue-print for the preservation of ecological theology as well as theological ecology.

The Svetaasvastara Upanishad speaks of God thus: "The one God hidden in all creatures, the All-pervading, the Inner Soul of all, the Governor of their actions, the Abode of all creation, the Witness, the Perceiver, the Absolute free from all attributes." This indeed is the language of the Tiruvāchakam too.

The one God = ஏகன்;
hidden in all creatures = அனேகன்;
the Inner Soul of all = இமைப் பொழுதும் என் நெஞ்சில் நீங்காதான்;
the All-pervading = பார்பதம் அனைத்துமாய் முளைத்து. . .;
the Governor = நாதன்;
the Abode = கோகழி ஆண்ட குருமணி;
the Witness = ஒருவன் என்னும் ஒருவன்/ அவன்;
the Perceiver = உணர்வு;
the Absolute = பரம்பொருள்.

God is all though all is not God. As He is in all, obeisance to Creation is obeisance to the Creator.

Friends, western scientists will be thrilled to the very cockles of their heart, when they chance to read the third Hymn of the Tiruvāchakam, namely, Tiruandappakuti. We know that philosophers and scientists were persecuted in the West for asseverating that the earth was spherical and not flat and that the stars were imponderable heavenly bodies and not tiny lights. Out Saint spoke of scientific truths casually, but with such precision and accuracy that stun modern scientists.

அண்டப் பகுதியின் உண்டைப் பிறக்கம்,
அளப்பு-அரும் தன்மை, வளப் பெருங் காட்சி –
ஒன்றனுக்கு ஒன்று நின்று எழில் பகரின் –

நூற்று ஒரு கோடியின் மேற்பட விரிந்தன;
இல் நுழை கதிரின் துன் அணுப் புரைய,
சிறிய ஆகப் பெரியோன், தெரியின் –
[On scrutiny one will find
The spherical and heavenly bodies of the
Cosmos,
Their limitlessness, their uberous
And multitudinous forms,
And the way they excel each other in
pulchritude,
To exceed in number a thousand millions.
"God indeed is so great that all these worlds,
In His presence, are like the minute
atomic particles,
Seen in the sun's rays that streak into a house"]

Let us for a while ponder over the significance of our Saint's dicta. At the outset it reveals the fact that nothing is void of God; He Himself fills His work. As Joubert observed: "Space is the stature of God." Lucretius affirmed thus: "Summaram summa est aeternum." [The sum total of all sums total is eternal.]

Lines 1 to 12 of the third Hymn deal with a great many scientific truths. We know that light travels 1,86,000 miles per second. In one year, it covers six billion miles, i.e., 6 followed by 12 zeroes. This indeed is the light year. The Milky Way is composed of billion and billions of stars. Of these the sun is one. From the centre of the Milky way, the sun is 32,000 light years away.

If the sun were hollow it could contain many hundreds of earths. There are stars which could contain thousands of such suns. There are thousands of other stars which could contain such stars. The Milky Way contains 200,000,000,000 stars. There are many such Milky Ways in the known universe.

Of the scriptures of the world, it is the Tiruvāchakam which spoke ex cathedra of the spherical shape of earth and heavenly bodies and gave scientifically true glimpses of the universe. Our Saint very pointedly brought to the notice of the wise men "the spherical and heavenly bodies of the cosmos," "their limitlessness, their uberous and multitudinous forms," and also observed that their number exceeds a thousand millions. The word million denotes a high number which can also refer to trillions and zillions.

Friends, huge tomes will have to be indited on the embryolgoy as delineated by our Saint. Of the millions of spermatozoa, only one eventually gets fertilized to become a foetus. It has to vanquish all others which are legion, to become an embryo. The (successful) gamete seen through a powerful microscope looks like the leaf of a spear to which is attached a tiny handle. This successful spermatozon is known as *Vel* (வேல்) in Tamil. What indeed is *Vel?* வெல்லுவது வேல் (that is Vel which vanquishes). No wonder the victorious gamete is called *Vel.*

I think that no one has illustrated better the truth of his matter as Aldous Huxley has done. I must say here that of this matter of utmost seriousness, he spoke in a vein seemingly ridiculous and ludicrous. Many a truth is uttered in jest. I will now place before you the verses of Aldous Huxley.

Fifth Philosophers' Song

A million million spermatozoa
All of them alive:
Out of their cataclysm but one poor Noah
Dare hope to survive.

And among the billion minus one
Might have chanced to be
Shakespeare, another Milton, a new Donne-
But the One was me.

Shame to have ousted your betters thus,
Taking ark while the others remained
outside!
Better for all of us, froward Homunculus,
If you'd quietly died.

About 'THE AGE OF THE FOETUS,' this is what Dr.K.S.Narayan Reddy says in his work entitled: "The Essentials of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology."

"The term 'developing ovum' is used for the first 7 to 10 days after conception, i.e., until the implantation occurs. It is called an 'embryo' from one week to the end of the second month and later it is called 'foetus'. It becomes an infant when it is completely born.

End of first month: Length 1 cm; weight 2.5 gm. The eyes are seen as two dark spots, and the mouth as a cleft.

End of second month: Length 4 cm; weight 10 gm. The hands and feet are webbed. The placenta begins to form. The anus is seen as a dark spot.

End of third month: Length 16 cm; weight 30 gm. The eyes are closed and the pupillary membrane appears. Nails appear and the neck is formed.

End of fourth month: Length 16 cm; weight 120 gm. Sex can be recognised. Lanugo hair is seen on the body. Convolutions begin to develop in brain. Meconium is found in the duodenum.

End of fifth month: Length 25 cm; weight 400 gm. Nails are distinct and soft. Light hair appears on head.

Skin is covered with vernix caseosa. Meconium is seen at the beginning of the large intestine.

End of sixth month: Length 30 cm; weight 700 gm. Eyebrows and eyelashes appear. Skin is red and wrinkled and subcutaneous fat begins to be deposited. The testes are seen close to the kidneys.

End of seventh month: Length 35 cm; weight 0.9 to 1.2 kg. Nails are thick. Eyelids open and pupillary membrance disappears. Skin is dusky red, thick and fibrous. Meconium is found in the entire large intestine. Testes are found at external inguinal ring. Gallbladder contains bile and caecum is seen in the right iliac fossa.

End of eight month: Length 40 cm; weight 1.5 to 2 kg. Nails reach the tips of fingers. Scalp hair is thicker. Skin is not wrinkled. Left testis is present in the scrotum. Placenta weighs 500 gm.

End of ninth month: Length 45 cm; weight 2.5 to 3 kg. Posterior fontanelle is closed. Scalp hair is dark and 4 cm long; meconium is seen at the end of the large intestine. Scrotum is wrinkled and contains both testes. Placenta weights 500 gm.

End of tenth month: (Full-term child): Length 50 to 53 cm; crown-rump length 30 to 33 cm; weight 2.5 to 5 kg . . .   . . ."

Friends, the medical books furnish the details pertaining to the anatomical growth of the embryo. The toils and turmoils it undergoes are yet to be discovered and recorded. Our Saint, thanks to his Yogic vision, perceives the happenings in the uterus and describes them in ten monthly stages. He says:

மானிடப் பிறப்பினுள், மாதா உதரத்து,
ஈனம்இல் கிருமிச் செருவினில் பிழைத்தும்;

ஒரு மதித் தான்றியின் இருமையில் பிழைத்தும்;
இரு மதி விளைவின் ஒருமையில் பிழைத்தும்;
மும் மதி-தன்னுள் அம்மதம் பிழைத்தும்;
ஈர் இரு திங்களில் பேர் இருள் பிழைத்தும்;
அஞ்சு திங்களில் முஞ்சுதல் பிழைத்தும்;
ஆறு திங்களில் ஊறு அலர் பிழைத்தும்;
ஏழு திங்களில் தாழ்புவி பிழைத்தும்;
எட்டுத் திங்களில் கட்டமும் பிழைத்தும்;
ஒன்பதில் வருதரு துன்பமும் பிழைத்தும்;
தக்க தச-மதி தாயொடு தான் படும்
துக்க-சாகரத் துயரிடைப் பிழைத்தும்
... ...

[Human embryo survives the skirmishes
Of the countless bacteria in its mother's uterus;
In the first month, the *Taandri*-like embryo
Gets not split into two; in the second month,
It survives the onslaugtht of that which can
Make it amorphous; in the third, it survives
The flood of uterine fluid; in the month that is
Two times two, it survives the great inner murk;
In the fifth, it eludes miscarriage;
In the sixth, it survives itches galore;
In the seventh it escapes premature death;
In the eighth it survives blockades;
In the ninth, the pains of that month;
In the duly-awiated tenth, it survives
Its and its mother's troublous sea of sorrows;
... ...

Friends, tenets of many a goodly 'ology', 'onomy' and 'doxy' can be gleaned from the Tiruvāchakam. The research in this connection is to be undertaken by someone more competent than I. I appeal to such gifted persons to take to the serious cultivation of the Tiruvāchakam for the welfare of the entire humanity.

"The wise" said Robert Graves, "will live by Faith." Let us have faith in the Faith which the Tiruvāchakam advocates. *Wonderfine* are the everlasting utterances of our Saint which are proof against the tooth of Tima and razure of oblivion. A constant and devoted perusal of the Tiruvāchakam will rehabilitate us back to correct and proper and wholesome taste – moral, religious, social, ethical and spiritual. It has a continuing appeal. It will place us within the circle of the effulgence of God and the Godly. It will comfort human mortality with immortal grace.

Before I conclude, let me bring to your notice the sea change undergone by Dr.G.U.Pope – the immortal translator of the Tiruvāchakam. During the close of his life, Pope – the pious Christian par excellence–, pored over the Tiruvāchakam with tear-bedewed eyes. Whenever he wrote a letter to anyone he would begin it with a quotation from the Tiruvāchakam. A few months before he passed away, he wrote to his revered friend Sir S.Subrahmaniya Iyer – more popularly known as the Mayilai Munivar. A portion of the letter was smudged. By way of explanation Pope wrote to say that as he was writing the letter, the Tiruvāchakam passage prefixed to the letter, so moved him that he could not help shedding tears. They fell down on a portion of the letter which became smudged. Pope would not tear the letter and write a fresh one, as he thought and confessed that the very tears engendered by the Tiruvāchakam are sacred and sacrosanct. "அழுதால் உன்னைப் பெறலாமே" says the Tiruvāchakam. Yes, Siva can be gained by sincere tears.

Friends, I do not know if you are aware of the fact that Ca.Kandiah Pillai – the Sri Lankan Tamil Pandit belonging to Tenkovai of Jaffna, was editor of the weekly 'VITTHAKAM' which was printed and published in Pondicherry. It made its first appearance on 30 November 1933. I have with me the first 51 numbers of this scholarly journal. The following verse from the Tiruvāchakam was invariably prefixed to its leader.

காலம் உண்டாகவே, காதல் செய்து
உய்ம்மின்; கருது-அரிய
ஞாலம் உண்டானொடு, நான்முகன்,
வானவர், நண்-அரிய
ஆலம் உண்டான், எங்கள் பாண்டிப்
பிரான்; தன் அடியவர்க்கு
மூல-பண்டாரம் வழங்குகின்றான்;
வந்து முந்துமினே.

[As the time for salvation abounds, love Him
and stand
Redeemed. He is our God of the Paandya
Realm,
The One who ate the Halaahalaa, who is
inaccessible
To the Devas, the Four-faced and the
inconceivably
Glorious one that devoured the earth.
He, the Source,
Original of Wealth, gives munificently to His
Servitors. Lo, foregather in all celerity.]

Kandiah Pillai did well to quote this verse every week and announce it as the message of human life. Lo, the Tiruvāchakam is the Primal Source of Wealth. It gives munificently to the servitors of God. Do foregather in all celerity.

11. Mysticism in Saint Mānickavāchakar's Tiruvāchakam

Before I plunge in medias res, it behoves me to present to you a brief account of the Saint's life as preserved by tradition. The tradition, I daresay, is but a concretization of symbolic sequences.

At his birth, the Saint was christened Sivabhāthyan (he who belongs to Siva, the Lord). He hailed from the clan of Āmāthyās (councillors). He was born in the town called Tiruvādavụr, near Madurai, the capital of the Pāndya Kings.

He was a precocious child. Before this Brahmin child was sixteen summers old, he came by a clear and precise knowledge of the Scriptures, in particular, the Saiva Aagamas. As an Āmāthya, he, with ease, mastered the Raja Niti, the code of conduct governing the monarch, the ministers and the officials.

Hearing of his achievement the Pandya monarch sent for him. Immensely impressed by the lad's polyphiloprogenitive polymathy, the ruler of the realm made him his prime-minister who had an old head on his young shoulders. He discharged his duties exemplarily. He was unattached to wordly grandeur. All his serious thoughts had already rest in heaven.

When the king heard that horses of excellent breed had arrived at a port near Tirupperunturai, he handed over a fat purse of gold to his prime-minister and bade him secure the horses. When with his retinue, he came near Tirupperunturai, he beheld a saintly Guru seated under a Kuruntam tree, surrounded by a large number of chastened chelas (disciples). The very sight ravished the soul of our Saint. The Guru, it is said, was none other than Lord Siva who, in a human form, had made His advent on earth. Our Saint took refuge in Him and the Guru initiated him into the mystery of emancipating grace. So, our Saint, then and there, emerged as a jivan-mukta – one who is liberated while yet alive. His phenomenal existence came to an end auguring the commencement of his spiritual life. He grew dead to his mission as a prime-minister. The money entrusted to him was spent on raising a shrine for Siva.

The retinue that accompanied him returned to Madurai and made a report of the happenings to the Pāndya. The King was upset and his anger knew no bounds. He despatched a peremptory order for his minister's immediate return. Apprised of the King's order, our Saint prayed to Siva who bade him inform the King's messengers that the horses would arrive at Madurai during the month Aavani (August - September) on the day when the star Mūlam (Scorpii) came to be linked with that day.

No doubt, on that day, the horses did arrive at Madurai, led by Siva Himself in the guise of a horse-groom. However these were but jackals transformed by Siva into chargers. That very night they resumed their former state and created havoc among the steeds in the King's mews.

Therefore our Saint was taken to task. He was administered a series of punishments. Eventually Lord Siva caused the Vaikai river to inundate. Orders were issued by the King that his subjects should forthwith strengthen the banks of the river. Each family was allotted a specified portion.

During this time there lived in Madurai an old woman called Vanti, a widow steeped in chill penury. She made a living by the sale of rice-cakes which she baked every day. Old and decrepit, she was utterly unsuited to the job allotted to her. Neither did she have money wherewith to hire a substitute. In her despair, she proceeded to the shrine of Siva and prayed to Him. As G.U.Pope, the first translator of the Tiruvāchakam says, 'Siva is never appealed to in vain.' The Lord called on Vanti in the disguise of a labourer and told her that he would do her work, provided he was first given the rice-cakes which were baked by her that day. He ate them all and made a show of carrying earth to strengthen the bank. He danced wildly, sang snatches of song, and feeling fatigued, quietly lay down on the river-bank and fell asleep with His basket for a pillow. During his inspection, the King was shocked by the audacity of a mere coolie. Brandishing his cane, he dealt a blow to the slumberer when the blow fell on him, the entire universe shuddered. Every god in heaven and every sentient being on earth felt the blow. Lo, the coolie, on a sudden, disappeared.

The contrite King appealed to our Saint to forgive him. He gave him leave to freely pursue his spiritual life. Our Saint commenced his pilgrimage. He visited holy shrines and hymned the Lord. He authored two opuses, they being the Tiruvāchakam and the Tirukkovaiyār. He chose to live near Tillai which enabled him to visit the famous shrine everyday. One day, a venerable devotee presented himself before our Saint with a request to be permitted to take down his hymns and psalms and songs from his own lips. The Saint sang them all and the devotee indited them on palm-leaves. The devotee was Siva Himself.

Next morning the palm-leaves were found on the pedestal of the icon of Siva in Thillai. The sacerdotal chief found them to be the works of our Saint. The devotees approached our Saint and requested him to explicate his hymns. Our Saint proceeded to the shrine, pointed to the icon of the Dancing Lord and proclaimed thus: "The Lord of the Assembly is the meaning." This said, he disappeared merging into the image of Siva.

Dr.G.U.Pope compares our Saint to David, St. Paul, St. Augustine and other holy men. His open admiration for our Saint has irked many a Christian.

I said earlier that the traditional version of our Saint's life is but a concretization of symbolic sequels. I cannot, within the time allotted to me, descant on all the aspects of his life. Yet will I essay to highlight a point or two.

According to the tradition, jackals were converted into stallions. This is to be understood in the esoteric light of Siva-yoga. Any yoga demands breath-control. Kundalini yoga inculcates the science of pushing up the wind from the region of podex to the cranium. The wind that is so pushed up becomes pure and unsullied. It helps the soul reach the salvific state and get oned with the deity. This process is described as 'nariyei-p-pariyaakkal' (metamorphosing jackal into horse). Nari (jackal) abides in the lower region and escapes through the anal aperture. Pari (horse) is the pure and unsullied wind the abides in the cranium. It is significant to observe here that the Tiruvāchakam speaks of the transformation of nari into pari and not vice versa.

When Siva ate the rice-cakes He alone relished them. However when He was beaten by the Pāndya, the blow fell on all the gods and sentient entia. This episode highlights the twyfold nature of the Deity. God alone experiences the state of individuality as well as universality. His individual experience is that which is called Vyashti and His universal, *Samashti*. Siva ate the rice-cake in His state of *Vyashti* and received the beating in His state of *Samashti*.

Prof. Glenn E. Yocum of Whittier College, in partial fulfilment of his thesis, produced a work called "Hymns to The Dancing Siva."[1] On the page preceding his Introduction, three quotations – one from Emily Dickinson, one from T.S.Eliot and one from Edward Taylor–, appear. His introduction dwells on the manifold greatness of the Tiruvāchakam. In conclusion, the author says: "Finally a word should be said about the quotations on the page preceding this chapter. Although all the three passage derive from times and places far removed from the ninth century Tamilnad, they were chosen for their resonance with themes which are central to the Tiruvāchakam. In this, they witness a certain unity of the human spirit, revealing parallels which give encouragement to our attempts at understanding other men across time and culture. On a personal level, they indicate a happy and unexpected result of my study of Tamil poetry; for the Tiruvāchakam succeeded where several English teachers failed, bringing me an appreciation of and a sense of excitement about poetry in my native language."

The first hymn of the Tiruvāchakam opens thus: "Na Ma Si Va Ya Vāzhka!" This may be translated in more ways than one. Captivated by the profundity of this utterance, I have translated the opening words thus:

"Blessed is (the name) Na Ma Si Va Ya." According to me, the Old Testament reveals no nobler name than

Job's. He was put to the worst of tests non-stop. The Devil's Advocate was the Devil himself. Job suffered loss after loss. This is what the First Book of Job says: "While he (Job) was yet speaking, there came another, and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house; and behold a great wind came across the wilderness, and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you.

"Then Job arose, and rent his robe, and shaved his head, and fell upon the ground, and worshipped. And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return; the LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."[2]

St. Mānickavāchakar's very first utterance is this: "Blessed is (the name) Na Ma Si Va Ya."

Saivites are commanded to chant in all reverence the name of Siva. The eighth Psalm of David opens thus:

"O Lord, our Lord

how majestic is thy name in all the earth."[3]

The first line of the Tiruvāchakam ends thus: "நாதன் தாள் வாழ்க!" This passage hails the hallowed feet of Siva. The second Psalm of David says: "Serve the Lord with fear, with trembling kiss his feet."[3]

The feet of Lord Siva represent Gnosis. It is through Gnosis salvation is gained.

The second line of the Tiruvāchakam runs thus: "இமைப் பொழுதும் என் நெஞ்சில் நீங்காதான் தாள் வாழ்க."

"Blessed are the feet (of the Lord) that part not from
my bosom, even for the time, the eyes take
to wink."

Yes, God is omnipresent. He indwells the souls of saints as well as sinners. A soul made pure by love of God is truly a shrine of God. Did not John Milton invoke the Holy Ghost thus:

"And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer

Before all temples the upright heart and pure."[4]

Though God indwells all souls, a good many of them are utterly unaware of His salvific presence. So, His divine presene is of no avail unto them that are steeped in nescience. God's presence is felt more and more when bhakti (devotion) begins to abound steadily. However, on occasions, this devotion may suffer some diminution. Then is the soul besieged by troubles galore. It even feels that it stands forsaken by God. As no man can attain perfection in an easy way, even a saint should always keep a surveillance over his body, words and thoughts. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. And liberty, truly speaking is absolute slavery to God. The salvific dictum says: "Fear God and none else."

Alive to his imperfection, our Saint, ever and anon, appeals to Siva not to forsake him. The fifth chapter of Tiruvāchakam comprising fifty quatrains of anaphoretic verses, is entitled: "Forsake me not."

The first verse ends thus:

சடையவனே தளர்ந்தேன் எம்பிரான்
என்னைத் தாங்கிக் கொள்ளே.

"O One of matted hair (Siva)! I stand enervated!
O my Lord God, raise and support (me)."[5]

This indeed is the very prayer of John Milton. Invoking the Holy Spirit, he bursts out thus:

"... ... ... what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support."[6]

In verse 23, our Saint says:

"I am a futile servitor. Will You let go Your hold on me? If You do so, I will perish..."[7]

When Jesus was about to give up his ghost, a sense of desolation blanketed his spirit. He even felt that God had forsaken him. At that hour, he burst out thus:

"Elo-i, Elo-i, la'-ma sabach-thani?" This is translated thus: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"[8]

The twenty second psalm of David opens thus: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"[9]

Again the twenty seventh psalm prays thus: "Cast me not off, forsake me not, O God of my salvation!"[10]

Though in a state of acute crisis, the soul is prone to think that it stands forsaken by God, it is not at all forsaken by God. However, its angst as well as agony drives it to think so.

Saivism firmly believes that God is incapable of forsaking any soul. The concept of perdition is totally alien to Saivism. Every soul is entitled to salvation. It may undergo many many rebirths, but ultimately it gets oned with Siva. Salvation is not a spatial concept in Saivism. The soul rests in the hallowed feet of Siva, shorn of everything else, and enjoys unending bliss.

Saivism believes in Karma. A simple explanation of this concept is as follows. Every action has a consequence. If the act is good, the consequence is good. If it is bad, so is the consequence. The doer cannot escape the consequences of his deeds. He will have to eat the fruit of his deeds, nolens volens. Galatians 7 says: "... for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."[11] Saivism says that he will have to eat it too. So, the doer gets born again and again. The soul, according to Saivism, undergoes transmigration as well as metampsychosis.

Isiah 3 says: "Tell the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds. Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with them, for what his hands have done shall be done to him"[12]

Many births are needed to eat the consequence of deeds. Our Saint says:

> "O God!' You are infinite! You are boundless!
> I, the base one of evil Karma, know not the way
> to narrate Your immense glory! O our God!
> grass, herb, worm, tree, beasts a good many,
>   bird, snake, stone, men, ghouls, bootha-host,
>   cruel Asuras, sages and Devas: I was born
>   as all these fauna and flora, and am now
>   utterly fatigued."[13]

To decide who the winner is, three or five sets are played by the participants in a tennis match. A fortiori, a single birth is inadequate to judge a man. This view is held by all the Indian faiths including Jainism and Buddhism. It takes many thousand years for coal/carbon to get converted into diamond. A soul must needs require many, many – a good many incarnations. By this principle are guided the Indian faiths.

Saivism speaks of a tenfold process. It is called Dasa Kaariyam. A soul passes through nine stages to reach the tenth consummate state.

Six and thirty are the tattvas attached to a human soul. These are knit to the soul for its guidance. These tattvas (principles) are to be properly made use of by the soul. However, more often than not, the soul is prone to abuse these. First the soul should know of these tattvas, their form, character and content. This is known as *tattva-rupam.* Next, it should come by *tattva-darshan.* Darshan is envisioning. Darshan debunks the insentient nature of these tattvas. So, they should be got rid of by the grace of God. *Tattva-suddhi* (purification) is the third stage and it marks the riddance of tattvas.

Similarly the soul should know what it is. Such knowing is called *Aanma-rupam.* Then the soul should break with phenomenality. It should become deedless. It should do only those deeds promoted by God and pleasing to God. This is known as *Aanma-darshan.* The soul should wash away its taints. This is called *Aanma-suddhi.*

Next, the soul should experience *Siva-rupam.* It should be convinced of God's omneity and feel His presence everywhere. This visioning is *Siva-darshan.* This leads to *Siva-yoga.* Siva is the sole Mover. Things occur as willed by Him. The soul should realize this and be yoked to Him. The consummation is *Siva-bhogam.* This marks the total transmutation of the soul. The soul is now filled with the sempiternal bliss of Siva. Bhogam is bliss. It is realisable while the soul still remains embodied. Such a soul is hailed as a jivan-mukta.

A similar process was adumbrated by St.Augustine. His De Doctrina Christiana posits seven steps by which the soul comes to God. The first of these is 'the fear of God' which G.U.Pope translates as Deva Bhakti. The second is 'the reverent study of the divine revelation'. The third is 'love of God and of our fellowmen'. The fifth, sixth and seventh according to G.U.Pope correspond to chapters VI, VII and VIII of the Tiruvarutpayan – a Saiva Siddhanta text. These deal with the process of knowing, the light of soul and the state of bliss.

There is no term either in Tamil or Sanskrit to signify mysticism. What is to-day hailed as a mystic experience prevailed among the Indian seers, saints, sages, munis and bhaktas, millennia ago.

William James observes: "In India, training in mystical insight has been known from time immemorial under the name of yoga. Yoga means the experimental union of the individual with the divine."[14]

The word yoga is to-day a much misunderstood word. In the West Yoga is taken to mean certain exercises which keep the body fit. Many pseudo-yogis have begun to mushroom everywhere. This indeed is a sad state of affairs. True yoga is Siva-yoga which divinizes man and causes his soul to get yoked with God. This is possible only when the soul is made pure through Dasa Kāriyam. The process posited by St.Augustine partakes of the nature of yoga to an extent.

The yogis of India were endowed with the yogic vision and they communed with God without the aid and assistance of bodily instruments. They knew all about the phenomenal universe. Many of their pronouncements came to be attested by scientific discoveries, centuries later.

St.Mānickavāchkar, without the help of a telescope or any other scientific apparatus could envision the cosmos in its multifoliate grandeur. Before bringing to your notice the relevant passage from the Tiruvāchakam, let me quote a passge of Morris Mandel's which appeared in November, 1972 issue of the Reader's Digest.

"The sun is so large that if it were hollow, it could contain more than one million worlds, the size of our earth. There are stars in space so large that they could easily hold 500 million suns, the size of ours. There are about 100,000 million stars in the average galaxy – and at least 100 million galaxies in known space."

This scientific discovery was announced by our Saint, thanks to his yogic vision, 1,200 years ago.

"On scrutiny one will find
the spherical and heavenly bodies of the Cosmos,
Their limitlessness, their uberous
And multitudinous forms
And the way they excel each other in
pulchritude
To exceed in number a thousand millions."[15]

What indeed are these in the omnipresence of God?

Our Saint says:

"God indeed is so great that all these worlds,
In His presence, are like the minute atomic
particles,
Seen in the sun's rays that streak into a house.
He, the eternally young and handsome One,
Spins the throngs of Brahma-s
and the multitudinous Vishnu-s,
The commencement, the sustenance
and the absorption,
Like the swaying and spinning of the hurricane
Which is made up of strong and subtle currents."[16]

Boundless is the creation of God. And nothing is void of God. As Seneca observes, "He Himself fills His work." Did not Joubert affirm that space is the stature of God? "Summarum summa est alternum" (The sum total of all sums total is eternal)" said Lucretius. "But how can" asked Dryden "finite grasp Infinity?"

Let none think that a yogi is least concerned about his contemporary world. Be it known that he is very much concerned about it. He prays for its weal and welfare. The Prince of yogis, namely St. Tirumular said: "நான் பெற்ற இன்பம் பெறுக இவ்வையகம்" (May the world come by the weal with which I am blessed).[17] Our Saint too reminds his contemporaries of the ever-bountiful nature of Siva and tells them as follows:

"மூல பண்டாரம் வழங்குகின்றான்
வந்து முந்துமினே

(He, the Source original of Wealth gives munificently; lo, foregather in all celerity."[18]

Our Saint lays stress on humility, the avoidance of sin, the acknowledgement of the commission of sin, the prayer for Siva's forgiveness who is infinitely merciful, the commitment to service and the possession of a contrite heart. By its very nature, the human soul stands tainted by Aanava Malam, which may in a way, be described as the ancestral blindness of the soul. Nescience taints the soul with falsity. Our Saint confesses thus:

"I am indeed false; my heart is also false;
my love too is false;
Yet, If I, the Karma-ridden, weep for You,
I can secure You (O Siva)."[19]

How true! Did not William Blake affirm thus:

"Every tear from every eye
Becomes a babe in Eternity."[20]

The soul's awareness of God's presence not only in it but also in its body is immensely salvific. It can never adequately thank the Almighty for its loving kindness. Our Saint tearfully admits this when he says:

எந்தையே! ஈசா! உடல் இடம் கொண்டாய்;
யான் இதற்கு இலன், ஓர் கைம்மாறே[21]

"O my Father! O Lord-God! You abide in my body.
How can I requite You for this?"

As Lawrence Housman declared: "Man's body is to be God's mercy-seat..."[22] Our Saint was constantly aware of the salvific God-root in him.

Our Saint always strove to detach himself from all that is not-God. This alone achieves the soul's at-one-ment with God. It was this Siva-yoga our Saint was after. This Siva-yoga ushers in the sun-rise of Gnosis doubled with the Grace of Siva which all at once or by stages, leads the soul to get oned with Siva. This is what our Saint came by through the Grace of God.

இன்று, எனக்கு அருளி, இருள் கடிந்து, உள்ளத்து
எழுகின்ற ஞாயிறே போன்று
நின்ற நின் தன்மை நினைப்பு அற நினைத்தேன்;
நீ அலால் பிறிது மற்றின்மை;
சென்று–சென்று, அணுவாய்த் தேய்ந்து – தேய்ந்து, ஒன்று ஆம்
திருப்பெருந்துறை உறை சிவனே!
ஒன்றும் நீ அல்லை; அன்றி, ஒன்று இல்லை;
யார் உன்னை அறியகிற் பாரே?[23]

"This day, gracing me, You chased away my murk,
Poised in my soul like the rising sun. On this –
Your inhering nature and there being nought else
But Yourself–, I thought and thought till
thought

Itself ceased. O Siva abiding at the sacred
Peruntural!
Coming closer and closer to You and in the
process,
Wearing away again and again, I was reduced
To my atomic self (shorn of all else) and got
Oned with You. You are not aught in the universe;
Yet there is nought save You.
Who can know You at all?"

The soul's detachment from what is not God is the message of the above hymn. When the yogi attains this beatitude he beholds Siva everywhere. So wherever he is, he is but anchored in Siva. He has transcended likes and dislikes. He is for ever poised in bliss. Our Saint says:

"O my Light that transforms me into Bliss!
Who is my kin and who is not?"[24]

The soul that is so blessed has beyonded everything phenomenal–glory, wealth and attachment. His nexus with the world ceases. He seeks and experiences nothing but God.

The following announcement of our Saint is in point.

உற்றாரை யான் வேண்டேன், ஊர் வேண்டேன், பேர் வேண்டேன்;
கற்றாரை யான் வேண்டேன்; கற்பனவும் இனி அமையும்...[25]

"I seek not kith and kin, I seek not a dwelling place;
I seek neither name nor fame; I seek not
The erudite; all that is to be learnt is sufficient
Unto me."

The jivan-mukta thrives in this supreme sufficiency. This is God-given. The soul has reached its goal. It has realized Siva. The soul, now, is sempiternally poised in Siva's bliss. If the soul is still embodied, it is led by Siva alone. When the soul's body is cast away, it remains for ever oned with Siva.

In the embodied state, the essence of mystic experience is comprised in the transporting bliss of Siva's presence. Mysticism is a celebration, a conscious direct contact of the finite soul with the infinite and transcendental Reality. It is a union, an advaitam, a continual ethereal ecstasy caused by the piercing pencil of superlucent rays of Siva-surya which our Saint describes as *maasatra joti* (flawless light), *paramjoti* (supernal light), *aatium antamum illaa arum perum joti* (the supremely rare and immense Light that is beginningless and endless) and *swayamjoti* (self=effulgence).

The God-intoxicated mystic behaves in a way which is usually animadverted by the wordly-mined. No prophet is honoured in his home-town. However all sneering and jeering and all leering and fleering are ignored by the mystic. Our Saint says:

நாட்டார் நகை செய்ய நாம் மேலை வீடு எய்த
ஆள்தான் கொண்டு ஆண்டவா - பாடுதும் காண்[26]

"... ... ... Let us sing how He,
While the worldlings jeered at us, caused us
To gain the Empyrean, and rules us as his slaves..."

Of his ultimate mystic experience, our Saint sings thus:

எனை, நான் என்பது அறியேன்; பகல், இரவு ஆவதும் அறியேன்;
மனவாசகம் கடந்தான் எனை மத்த-உன்மத்தன் ஆக்கி;
சினமால் விடை உடையான், மன்னு திருப்பெருந்துறை உறையும்
பனவன் என்னைச் செய்த படிறு அறியேன்; பரம்-சுடரே[27]

I know not me as myself; also do I not know when
Day becomes night. He that transcended *manam*
And World, made me a mighty mad man. He owns
A wrathful and immense Bull. O Embyrean
Effulgence
I know not the chicanery, the Brahmin abiding at
The eternal and sacred Peruntural had
wrought."

The Brahmin referred to above is Siva. Our Saint refers to His act as chicanery. Yes, it is trickery. His trick transmutes the base metal into gold. He converts jackals into horses and sinners into saints. To this mystic alchemy the Tiruvāchakam bears eloquent testimony.

நமச்சிவாய வாழ்க! நாதன்தாள் வாழ்க!

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12. Abhinavagupta

India that is Bharat attests to the fact that her saintly sons were also martial heroes, celebrated for their military prowess. Bhishma, Drona and Krupa in the north and Paranjyoti who later came to be known as Sirutthonda Nāyanār in the south are a few of the outstanding examples.

In certain instances monarchs felt convinced that their triumph in war is thanks to the blessing of a godly personage whom they revere with all their soul.

Abhinavagupta comes in the line of Atrigupta of Agastiya-gotra. In A.D. 740 the sovereign Lalitāditya won his war against Yasovarman. Lalitāditya felt that his victory was made possible by Atrigupta – a saintly adherent of Saivism. He therefore took him to Kashmir where he was taken care of very well by the monarch.

Abhinavagupta mentions in his work, with great admiration, Atrigupta. He also respectfully mentions his grandfather Varāhagupta, a great servitor of Siva in his work. We can affirm with aplomb that Abhinavagupta's ancestors were spiritual leaders whose devotion to Siva was bourneless.

To Narasimhagupta and Vimalakala was born Abhinavagupta. He flourished between A.D. 940 and 1015. This period marks a golden chapter in the history of Thanjavur. Rajaraja, the great, ascended the Gadi in A.D. 985. His temple was consecrated in the year 1010. He passed away at or about 1015.

Abhinavagupta was a great Saivite of the Pratyabhigna of Kashmir Saivism. Rajaraja was a Saivite par excellence who belonged to what is now known as

Tamil Saivism – the quintessence of the Saivāgamic tradition.

Abhinavagupta was an acknowledged authority on Indian theatre. Rajaraja fostered the theatre and many an opera.

Abhinavagupta's commentary on the Nātyasastra is a classic, sui generis. Rajaraja fostered the art of dance and dedicated it to Siva-Nataraja. He appointed as many as 400 danseuses, very well trained in the traditional dance of Bharatanātya. He also appointed more than 100 persons as accompanists to the danseuses. He caused the etching of 108 dance-karanas in the Big Temple which still guide the practitioner of the tralatacious dance.

Thus we see that Kashmir in the north and Thanjavur in the south brought to the forefront, in one and the same period, the importance of the arts of music and dance as well as aesthetics. This coincidence is not fortuitous but divinely ordained. A full-length study in depth of the achievements of Abhinavagupta and Rajaraja is a desideratum.

It is imperative that a word of caution is to be administered in this context. One Sākta known as Abhinavagupta flourished in Kamarupa (Assam) during the end and the beginning of the eighth and ninth centuries. It is of this Sakta, Mādhavāchārya mentions in his Sankaradigvijaya. This Abhinavagupta is different from the Abhinava of Kashmir.

From G.T. Deshpande we come to know that Abhinavagupta learnt from many competent teachers many, many subjects. From his father Narasimhagupta he learnt Vyakarna (Grammar), from Vāmanātha Dvaita Tantra, from Bhūtiraja Brahmavidya, from

Bhūtirajatanaya Dvaitādvaita Saivāgama, from Lakshmanagupta Krama and Trika Darshanas, from Bhatta Induraja Dvanyaloka, from Bhatta Tauta Dramaturgy and from Sambhunatha Kaulāgama.

Abhinavagupta cultivated in depth the triad of Āgamic lore, they being Krama Trika and Kula. The Pratyabhigna is but a branch of the Trika. He was never a dabbler or a dilettante. He was punctilious in the pursuit of knowledge. He cultivated the habit of unclouded thinking. He wrote with utmost clarity. He was a past master of Etymology. He was truly a Kavi. His vision penetrated through the past, the present and the to-come, without let or hindrance. His communication was on a par with communion.

Abhinavagupta was a Siva-yogi. His yogic vision enabled him to indite original opuses as well as commentaries. He is, sui generis, a Bhashyakāra. The point to be remembered in this connection is that he never deprecated the value of human endeavour. When he says that knowledge is attained through GURUTAH (from the preceptor), SASTRATAH (from Sastras) and SVATAH (from self-experience), the effort to be undertaken by the seeker is explicitly emphasized.

Abhinava was a profuse writer. Not all his works are extant. As many as 14 works to which he refers in his writings are not traceable today. We will mention hereunder a few of his more important works.

To inculcate to his chelas the fundamental tenets of the Saivism as posited by him he wrote a poem called Bodhapanchadasika, in sixteen verses. The envoi verse declares the purpose of the composition.

To explicate the vital theories of the Nyāya system, he indited an explication of Mālini Vijaya Tantram called

Mālini Vijaya Vārtikam. The exposition of the first verse alone is now extant.

Rudrayāmala Tantra is one of the 64 Advaita Tantras. On the concluding verse of this work Abhinava wrote a commentary called Parātrimsika Vivarna. This is very popular among Saiva Monists.

Among all the works of Abhinava the Tantrāloka is the most voluminous. It explicates the Saiva Āgamas. Jayaratha's commentary on Tantrāloka is a very popular work.

Tantra Sāra and Tantra Vatadhānika are the summaries of Tantrāloka.

Dhvanyāloka Lochanam is the outstanding commentary of Abhinava's on Ānandavardhana's Dhvanyāloka. Abhinava's explication of Dhvani is hailed as the most authentic by all writers on Alankāra Sastra.

Abhinava Bhārati is Abhinava's authoritative commentary called Nātyaveda-Vivriti on the Nātyasāstra of Bharata. This commentary is indeed the source of Abhinava's aesthetic concept of Rasa. Indeed this is the only commentary on Nātyasāstra which is extant. Truly speaking this is the source book on plays now extinct.

Abhinava's summary of the Bhagavad Gita is known as Bhaghavadgitārtha Sangraha. The Gita has a place in Saiva Literature, for, be it known that Krishna studied monistic Sivāgamas under Durvasus and other Āgamas under Upamanyu.

Paramārthasāra and Isvara Pratyabhigna-Vivriti Vimarsini are also by Abhinava. Dr. V. Raghavan, a Sanskrit scholar of Tamil Nadu, published for the first time in 1951 Abhinava's Paryante Panchasika.

Space does not permit us to dwell at length on the other works of Abhinava.

To construe in proper perspective Abhinava's explication of Rasa and Dhvani, one must be familiar with the metaphysical, philosophical and theological concepts of Godhead as posited by Abhinava. Saivism attaches especial importance to the Saiva Āgamas. Vedas are, no doubt, the foundational works. However, they are to be interpreted in the light of Saiva Āgamas. The Āgamas of North India are of three categories they being Dvaita (dualistic), Dvaidātvaida (dualistic as well as non-dualistic) and Advaita (non-dualistic). According to Saiva Siddhanta the word Advaita means non-dual. According to Kashmir Saivism, it means monistic. Saiva Siddhantam and Pratyabhigna Saivism are not one and the same. Yet, they both affirm that it is Siva who is the Supreme Ens. Abhinava synthesised the variform Saivism of Kashmir as is made evident by his Tantrāloka. So is it, he is hailed as the Ācharya of the three systems of Trika, Krama and Kula.

A close perusal of G.T. Deshpande's ABHINAVAGUPTA brings to the fore that certain vital concepts are shared by Saiva Siddhanta and Kashmir Saivism. They will be enumerated hereinbelow.

The concept of Pati, Pasu and Pāsam are common to these two systems. Pati is Siva who is known as Pasupati. Siva is the Lord of souls. The soul is referred to as Pasu. Pāsam, meaning rope/fetter comprises three malas, they being Ānava, Kanma (Karma) and Maya.

The concept of Maya as posited by Saiva Siddhanta requires a word of explanation. It is not the indescribable is – and – is not principle advocated by Ādi Sankara, and wrongfully understood as illusion by many. Maya in Saiva Siddhanta is a real (*ull porull*). It is the stuff out of which Tanu (body), Karana (organs), Bhuvana (worlds) and Bhoga (experience of good and bad) are evolved. 'Ma' refers to evolution and 'ya' to resolution (absorption). It is the causa materialis of the cosmos. At the time of absorption tanu etc., resolve into Maya which reverts to its causal state. Siva creates tanu etc., with the aid of His Sakti. A soul gets its body in keeping with its Karma. Siva is the Nimittha Kārana (Efficient Cause); His Sakti as well as the soul's Karma constitutes the instrumental cause; Maya is the cause of the cosmos and embodiment.

Karma constitutes both deeds and resultants of deeds. The soul will have to eat the consequences of its deeds to get purified. The results of its deeds are, as it were, stored as in a granary or promptuary – and are called *Sanchita*. From this a modicum is ladled out for the consumption of the soul in a given life. The soul that undergoes the life so ordained is said to experience its Prārabda. This is known by many names. This is called Niyati / fate / destiny / kismet. Fate indeed is invincible. While undergoing a destined life the soul commits a fresh set of deeds. The results of these – called Āgāmiya –, eventually feed and augment the stock of Sanchita which is ever on the increase. At some stage after many many incarnations, the soul gets vexed and becomes aware of the stultificatory futility of its acts. Then it lets go its hold on self-will. In other words, it becomes averse to deeds, good and bad, alike. It surrenders its I-ness and My-ness and willingly becomes a mere instrument in the hands of Siva. This is known as *Karma-sāmyam* / the balancing of deeds good and bad. This marks what is called *Mala-paripāka*. What takes place pat on Mala-paripāka is called *Sakti-nipāta*. This is similar to *Saktipāta* posited by the Saivism of Kashmir. Sakti-nipāta means descent of Grace. This is done by the advent of Siva-guru. The soul now undergoes Diksha. The Guru purifies the soul and makes it pure. This is done, as it were, by the entrustment of a pass-word, the most coveted of all boons. It is called *Panchākshara* (the mystic pentad of syllables). The soul has to chant it as taught by the Guru. This insulates the soul and averruncates its *Āgāmiya*. Thanks to *Diksha* the soul's Sanchita gets gutted with fire. Armed with the Panchakshara the soul is for ever safe. It steeps the soul in a felicity, the goodness of which is infinite.

Now, a word about Ānava Mala. This is not to be confused with Āngkāra which is haughty pride ego-begotten. It is not the quality of soul. It is soul's blemish. It is a beginningless defect found together with the beginningless soul. It is a darkening and denigrating principle. No soul is free from this. It is called *Irull* (Murk). It can be quelled only by *Arull* (Grace). No soul is free from this. It is Avidya (Nescience). It is the ancestral blindness of the soul if it may be so described. It abides in the soul like verdigris in copper. It is the root of all evils. It is the adversary of the soul. The Hebrew word for adversary is Satan. This Satanic malam is one only. Its powers are legion. It is rightly called *Mūlamala*. It is also called *Sahaja* mala (innate blemish). It is double darkness. It hides the soul and hides itself abiding with the soul. It can be routed only by Siva. Even then it will not die. It but lives dead. Its symbol is *Muyalaka* (*Apasmāra*) immobilized by the crushing foot of Lord Nataraja.

He who is liberated while yet alive is called a *jivan-mukta*. The jivan-mukta has his being in Siva. The acts of a jivan-mukta are enacted by Siva. His acts are like fried seeds. They cannot germinate. He is endowed with endless felicity. He companies with the devotees of Siva. He travels on life's common way in cheerful Godliness. When he sheds his mortal coil he is oned with Siva. It is thus he becomes heir to sempiternal bliss.

It can thus be seen that the soul's bondage has no beginning, but has an end while the soul's spiritual freedom has a definite beginning but no end.

The odyssey of the soul meets with fulfilment when it is anchored for ever in the salvific feet of Siva.

Many concepts of Saiva Siddhanta are also the concepts of Kashmir Saivism, mutatis mutandis.

Abhinava was a polymath. However he had no opportunity to cultivate Sivagnāna-bhotam – the crest-jewel of the canonical works of Saiva Siddhanta. It is in *Papavimochana Patala* of the Raurava Āgama. This Āgama was indited in the grantha script which was, in the good old days, unknown to the Saivites of North India.

The schools of Kashmir Saivism are, in the main, Spanda, Pratyabhigna, Krama and Kula. Each has a parampara (tradition). The propagators of Spanda are Vasugupta, Kallata, Mukula and Battendurāja; those of Pratyabhingya are Somānanda, Utpaladeva and Lakshmanagupta; those of Krama are Bhūtiraja and Helaraja and those of Kula are Bhairava Sumantinatha and Sambhunātha. It was given to Abhinava to synthesise the views of these preceptors. The above are the schools of Monistic Saivism. The important feature of these is that Saivism, both in theory and practice, is open to all without any restriction of caste. The dictum that proclaims this is: "Na atra jātyadhyapeksha kavacit."

In Saiva Siddhanta too we meet with Saiva saints who were considered untouchables.

Pratyabhigna means recognition. This takes place thanks to the gnosis conferred by Siva on a devout practitioner. By this the devotee comes by a transmuted identity. This is come by Diksha followed by a life of ascesis. However Pratyabhigna does not say that Diksha is indispensable for Moksha (Liberation).

Kashmir Saivism posits that the individual soul is identical with the Cosmic Soul. This view is not subscribed to by Saiva Siddhanta which affirms that Diksha is all-important as the initiation is done by Siva Himself or by one chosen by Him as Siva Guru. However apparent exceptions to this rule are also met with. Nāyanmār like Kannappa and Nandanār are referred to as excepted devotees. These however, says Saiva Siddhanta, were under the guidance of Siva from their birth thanks to their Purva-punya which partakes of the nature of Siva-punya.

Thirty six tattvas are linked to an individual to gain gradually the state of deliverance. These are linked with Maya — Suddha, Suddhāsuddha and Prakruti. Through proper discipline the human limbs / organs / instruments metamorphose into Siva-Karana and this causes the soul's merger with Siva. A whole volume has to be indited to explain in detail this divine process. The process takes place through three stages they being Kevala, Sakala and Suddha. These attest to the soul's bondage and liberation.

Now we will pass on to a discussion pertaining to Aesthetics as perceived by Abhinavagupta. Roughly stated, Aesthetics is the science and philosophy of Fine

Art. The highest form of fine art is poetry to which drama, music and dance are ineluctably linked. Drama is the highest form of poetry as is affirmed by the time-honoured dictum which says: "Kāvyeshu nākam ramyam." Drama, indeed, is the Palladium of rasas. The equivalent of the vocable rasa is not met with in any of the occidental tongues. "Raso vai sah" is an Upanishadic affirmation.

The earliest work available on Dance is Bharata's Nātya Sāstra which itself stands inspired by the Rg and Yajur Vedas. Rasa indeed is the vital constituent of drama. A playwright, worth the name, must be well acquainted with Rasas. Abhinava Bharati proclaims thus: "Ato Vyākhyātranata-sāmājikābhiprāyena tasyaiva Rasasyaiva pradhāmyam."

Vibhāva (situation with human focus), *Anubhāva* (mimic changes), *Vyabhicaribhāva* (transient emotions and *Sthāyibhāva* (basic emotion) configurate an aesthetic object. These are not the products of nature. They are the creations of Art which do not imitate but reproduce poetic vision. These, in one sense, materialize from what we may call the Aesthetic world. Abhinava Bharati says: "Evam sarvam Rasamayam Visvam."

Abhinava's only commentary on Bharata's Nātya Sāstra holds the field. The earlier commentaries mentioned by Abhinava are not extant. Before proceeding further in this connection certain terms are to be explained. *Vibhava* stands for the dramatic situation which is not the cause but the medium through which emotion surfaces up in the actor. The spectator experiences this when he identifies himself with the actor. *Vibhāva* has two aspects namely *Alambana*, the object which is primarily responsible for the arousal of emotion and *Uddipana,* the environment which stimulates emotion whence effects emerge called *Anubhāva*. Bhāvas are transient emotions. Sthāyi Bhāva is an emotive state of mind. That is a true drama which presents a complete action. The actualization takes place in five stages: (1) the fixing upon an objective, (2) the effort to realize it, (3) the reversal/peripety, (4) the overcoming of oppression and (5) the achievement of the objective. *Camatkāra, Bhoga* and *Spanda* are vital nomenclatures in Abhinava's philosophy.

Camatkāra is the joy inherent in the experience of an enjoyable state. It is imperfect as it is beset with impediments. The enjoyment too is ephemeral. In its sublimated level, it is perpetual.

Bhoga means experience of pleasure, pain and insentience. The Absolute in the context of *Bhoga* is called *Māheswaras*. Here it is called *Parama-Bhoga*.

The concepts of gunas – Sattva, Rajas and Tamas–, are also recognised in the realm of Aesthetics.

Spanda refers to Sakti and.its levels.

The aim of Aesthetics is to reach the transcendental level.

According to Abhinava, the Aesthetic experience passes through a pentad of stages or levels, they being sense level, imaginative level, emotive level, cathartic level and transcendental level.

Abhinava Bharati declares that the word *Rasa* is used in two different senses. At the first stage in the transcendental level where the universalized object is realized by the universalized subject, Rasa means the 'object of relish' (Rasyate iti rasah). In the second stage Rasa means the act of relishing (Rasanam rasah).

The duly equipped Aesthete alone can enjoy pure aesthetic experience. He is the Adhikari who is known as *Sahrudaya*. He is endowed with pure consciousness. A Sahrudaya is endowed with rasikatva (an inborn taste for literature). He is competent to cultivate drama and poetry. Again he is endowed with the power of visualization. He can focus with unerring precision. Other allied qualities also mark him. He is ever informed by Ānanda (Bliss).

Abhinavagupta is an authority on what is called Dhvani. Kshemaraja, Maduraja yogin, Yogaraja, Subhatadatta, Jayaratha, Bhaskarakantha and Maheswarānanda also called Goraksha follow in the footsteps of Abhinavagupta.

So far as music is concerned Sangita Ratnakara indited by Sāranga Deva is the opus par excellence. This work hails Abhinavagupta as the outstanding authority on the science of music. It is now well established that Abhinava is the final authority on Dhvani and Rasa. Kshemaraja, Kshemendra, Mammata, Sāradatanya, Ruyyaka, Hemendra, Visvanāta and others swear by Abhinavagupta.

Abhinavagupta was a voracious reader. His capacity for assimilation was boundless. He is a great defender of Kālidāsa. Abhinavagupta quotes from such Tāntrika works as Mālinivijayavārtika, Parātrimsikāvivarna, Tantrāloka and Tantrasastra. He is at home with opuses on Poetics like Dhvanyālokochana and Abhinavabharati. He is familiar with philosophical treatises such as Bhagavagitarthahasangraha, Prityabhignāvivrtivimarsini and Isvarapratyabhigna vimarsini. His quotations are apposite. These enable the reader to come by a correct critical appreciation and dispel doubts that shroud chronology. We find from Abhinava Bhārati many a point pertaining to Dramaturgy. Traditions considered to be obsolete stand revived by him. Many Sanskritists even today are of the opinion that Sanskrit is devoid of applied criticism. This is proved to be erroneous by him.

Great writers like Tolstoy, Bernard Shaw and Mark Twain have done their worst to denigrate Shakespeare. Even so, many bards in the past had attempted to expose Kālidāsa to pillory and derision. But Abhinavagupta ably defended Kālidāsa and showed that the denigrators of Kālidāsa were to blame. He unearthed the implications lying perdu in Kālidāsa's writings. Persons of limited vision are to a great extent benighted. So, he brought to light the grandeur and greatness of Poetic Freedom. The habit-bound and custom-ridden are not good critics at all. He shattered into smithereens attacks that warp the legitimate privileges of great and creative writers. He explained the true meaning of *Kulaka* and showed that it is a variety of *Gitakāvya* meant for music and dance.

Abhinavagupta practised yoga as delineated by Patanjali, Krama and Kula systems. He was a true yogi that came by authentic experience. He knew fully well the interplay of Prāna (vital air) and Manas (inner sensorium).

He was an impeccable grammarian. He cultivated in depth the Mahābhāshya of Patanjali and Bhartruhari's Vākyapadiya. He was well versed in grammatical technique (Prakriya) and Sabdabrahman (philosophical concept). Etymology was his forte.

The Sākta system is twofold. It treats the ultimate principle as feminine. In ritual it employs Pancha Makāras. These characterize the systems of Krama and

Kula. Panchamakāras are mnemonic and they stand for the pentad of terms beginning with 'Ma', they being Matsya (fish), Mudra (manual gestures), Māmsa (meat), Madira (liquor) and Maithuna (sexual congress). Therefore this practice was easily misunderstood as something that involves moral turpitude. This misconception prevailed even during the time of Abhinavagupta who was a practitioner of Krama and Kula systems. He delved deep into these systems and discovered the esoteric meaning of the Panchamakāras. He also wrote about it. He found that occult words have external (bāhya) and arcane (rahasya) import. Of this the Tamil Siddhas were well aware. The lay readers of their works are incompetent to apprehend their message. This too was the case with the practitioners of the systems of Krama and Kula. These systems are meant for the pure-hearted who have transcended the mundane and come by the divine.

Abhinavagupta made it plain that Saivism does not admit the bifurcation of religion and philosophy. He also declared that there are gradations in practice (Sādhana).

In fine, he was the greatest Āchārya of the Monistic Saivism of Kashmir. His place among the expounders of Monistic Saivism is the same as that of Sankaracharya's in Advaita Vedanta and that of Meykantar's in Saiva Siddhanta.

Abhinavagupta is, indeed, the Guru of gurus.

When comes such another!

13. The Contribution of non-Tamils to Tamil Saivism during the 19th and 20th centuries

The first one to translate into English Sivagnānabhotham and Sivappirakāsam is Rev. Henry R. Hoisington. With these two Meikanta Sastras also appeared a subsidiary work of Saiva Siddhanta, known as Tattuva Kattalei. The work appeared in 1854 (New Haven: Printed by B.L. Hamlen, Printer to Yale College).

The translator's understanding of the Philosophy of Tamil Saivism is of a high order. A close study of the three works reveals the exceptional powers of the translator's mind and intellect. His elucidation is amazingly simple. His translation, in the main, is dependable, its minor errors notwithstanding, especially when we take into consideration the difficulties which beset him which would have totally unnerved a lesser person. In a few instances he could not comprehend the meaning of certain vocables. The Sri Lankan Siddhantins followed a strict regimen. They would not come forward to help a Christian missionary however sincerely avid he was to learn Saiva Siddhantam. No wonder Pollāppillaiyār (Pillaiyār who manifested all by Himself) was translated by him as 'mischievous Pillaiyār'.

It was J.M. Nallaswami Pillai who brought out a near-authentic translation of the Sivagnānabhotham in 1895, forty one years after the publication of Hoisington's translation. Pillai's Introduction opens thus: "The system of Hindu Philosophy which is expounded in the following pages, and its name will be altogether new to many an English educated Hindu who is content to learn his religion and philosophy from English books and translations and from such scraps as turn up in newspapers and magazines." This dictum of Pillai, it pains me to remark, is true, yes, distressingly true. Only a modicum of the Tamil population in Tamil Nādu and Sri Lanka was familiar with Saiva Siddhanta. Inhabitants of Andhra, Karnātaka and Kerala – almost all of them–, have not at all heard anything about Saiva Siddhanta.

In his Preface, Pillai brings to our notice the following extract from the enlightening article of the Rev. G.M. Cobban.

"I once spent a few days with a fakir on his way to Rameswaram as a pilgrim. We travelled together and having come to be friends, he told me how he had spent four years in the jungle as the disciple of a celebrated religious teacher (Guru) and Saint. "And what did he teach you during the first year," I asked. 'The Sacredness of truth,' was the reply. "How did he teach it?" By teaching me nothing during the year. He was testing me to see if I was worthy to receive the truth." "And what did he teach you in the succeeding years?" "He spoke to me seldom and taught me in all twelve Sanskrit slokas" (24 lines). The instruments of the disciple's culture were few and simple, and its area small. Half a page of Sanskrit does not seem an exhaustive College Course. But the slokas stretched to infinity as the student gazed on them with the inner eye, and in a narrow space, and on the strong food of this small curriculam, he had grown to be an acute and strong thinker. But had he failed to show himself worthy to receive the truth, the Guru would not have taught him."

The twelve sutras are obviously the Sivagnānabhotha sutras.

The greatness of Tamil Saivism is succinctly sized by the Sivagnāna Siddhiyār thus.

அறியாமை அறிவு அகற்றி, அறிவினுள்ளே
அறிவுதனை, அருளினால், அறியாதே அறிந்து
குறியாதே குறித்து, அந்தக் கரணங்களோடும்
கூடாதே வாடாதே குழைந்து இருப்பை ஆயின் –
பிறியாத சிவன்தானே பிரிந்து தோன்றி,
பிரபஞ்ச பேதம் எல்லாம் தானாய்த் தோன்றி
நெறியாலே, இவை யெல்லாம் அல்லவாகி
நின்று, என்றும் தோன்றிடுவன், நிராதரன் ஆயே.

A rough classification announces that mankind is compact of the learned and the unlearned. A learned person, be it remembered is also ignorant in manifold ways. Indeed human knowledge is ineluctably linked with ignorance. Human knowledge, however great it be, is but partial knowledge. This may be stated better thus. Man is parviscient. True knowledge is that which is omniscient. This is Gnosis or God's own knowledge. This is known as Siva-Gnānam or Pati-Gnānam. It is wholly informed by God's own Grace. Pasu-gnānam or Pāsa-gnānam will not suffice. These two gnānams are acquired through sense – instruments and through inner sensorium. However one can gain Godly knowledge through the grace of Grace. This may take centuries, nay, millennia of hard work and commitment doubled with unswerving devotion. The process is known by the nomenclature Siva-yoga.

The verse of the Siddhiyār quoted above speaks of this Godly knowledge, ex cathedra. A moiety of the above verse conveys the truth. This is celebrated by Gurugnānasambandhar thus: "பார் விரித்த நூலெல்லாம் பார்த்து அறியச் சித்தியிலே ஓர் விருத்தப் பாதி போதும்." [The quintessential message of all the works in this world is contained in half a verse of the Siddihyār's.]

The truth of the Siddhiyār's verse is endorsed by Tāyumānavar thus:

பாதி விருத்தத்தால் இப்பார் விருத்தம் ஆக உண்மை
சாதித்தார் பொன்னடியைச் சாரும் நாள் எந்நாளோ!

[Oh, for the day when I can adore the golden feet of him who declared the truth – the futility of the whole world –, in half a stanza.]

The word Viruttham means (1) Verse and (2) Futility.

A Upanishad casts this idea in an interrogatory fashion. "O Swetaketu, have you learnt that knowing which everything is learnt?"

Meikanta Sastras are fourteen in number. The crest-jewel of these is the Siva Gnāna Bhotham. The verse commentary of this work goes by the name Sivagnāna Siddhiyār.

However, a beginner should not essay to cultivate either the Bhotham or the Siddhiyār. One must learn Tamil Saivism from a competent guru. The chela should unlearn whatever he had learnt before he begins to cultivate Tamil Saivism. The learner's mind must be clean and unflawed.

The initial works to be learnt are known as Kattalai-s. These are Saivite Catechisms.

Hoisington's translation of Tattuvakkattalai appeared in 1854. The next Kattalai to appear in translation was Sivappirakāsa Kattalai which was translated by Thomas Foulkes. This work was published in 1863. Foulkes served as a chaplain in India of Queen Victoria. His work needs to be revised with care.

A. Barth is an eminent orientalist. He wrote in French. His famous work relating to the 'Religions of

India' was translated by Rev. Wood into English and this work appeared in 1881. Barth was one of the few who was aware of the profound influence wielded by Saivism and Vaishnavism.

Sarva Darshana Sangraha in Sanskrit is an extraordinary work. In 1894 E.B. Cowell and A.E. Gough translated this work and M/s. Kegan Paul Trench Trubner and Co., published it. I have with me a reprint of this work published in 1976 by M/s. Cosmos Publications, New Delhi. Pages 112 to 127 are relevant for us. They deal with Saivism.

In 1900 appeared G.U. Pope's translation of the Tiruvāchakam. His work, inter alia, contains the translation of the Tiruvarutpayan and its old commentary.

In his letter dated Dec. 25, 1907, he wrote as follows to J.M.Nallaswamy Pillai.

"In the heart of this my last sermon lie truths that harmonise with all that is best in Tiruvachakam and Sivagnanam (Siva Gnāna Bhotham).

Within fifty days of this letter G.U. Pope passed away. He very much desired that his epitaph should read as follows. "Here lies a student of Tamil." His desire was carried out in a more remarkable way and the following epitaph marks his grave.

"George Uglow Pope D.D. of South India; sometime Lecturer in Tamil and Telugu in the University and Chaplain of Balliol College, Oxford. Born 24th April 1820. Died 11th February 1908. This stone has been placed by his family and by his Tamil friends in South India in loving admiration of his lifelong labours in the cause of Oriental Literature and Philosophy."

Saiva Siddhantins' debt to Pope is indeed humongous.

In 1902 appeared A.C. Clayton's pamphlet entitled "The Saiva Siddhanta: An Outline of its Main Doctrines." It is a well-written brochure, Clayton's prejudice notwithstanding; his affirmation declares that the best literature in Tamil cannot be understood except by the aid of Saiva Siddhanta.

In 1910, L.D. Barnett delivered a short lecture on 'The Saiva Siddhanta.' As even by 1910, no attempt was made by scholars to trace the broad outline of the system of Saiva Siddhanta to mark its points of agreement and disagreement with other and more popular schools of Hindu thought and to trace it back to its origins, Barnett chose to deliver this lecture which aimed at being suggestive rather than dogmatic.

The German work of H.W. Schomerus titled: "Der Saiva Siddhanta: Eine Mystik Indiens" was published in Leipzig in 1912. It is by a stroke of luck that I came by a copy of this work, hailed as a classic by discerning scholars. This work is a systematic exposition of Tamil Saivism. The respect this opus enjoys is seen from its inclusion in the bibliography of almost every book on Indian Religion published abroad. Ambikai Pākan, a scholar of Sri Lanka, flexed his transcreative muscle with a rendering of this work in English. A few instalments of his translation did appear in the Samājam's journal 'Saiva Siddhanta.' However the serialization stopped, on a sudden, to the sad disappointment of many readers. The value of this work stands enhanced by two charts – one on the three categories and the other on the triad of malas. An exhaustive index and a glossary of the Saiva Paribhasha form part of this work. This is what I wrote about this work in 1994. I very much longed for an

English translation of this work. Gibran said: "No longing remains unfulfilled." "How true!" In 2000, M/s.Motilal Banarsidass published an English translation of this work by Mary Law. I perused this work with delight great. This translation is highly readable and dependable. In partial fulfilment of her thesis entitled "Western Understanding of Saiva Siddhanta (M.Phil. Thesis, University of Wales, Cardiff, 1993), Mary Law translated the entire work of Schomerus. All kudos to Mary Law!

It was Schomerus who translated the entire Sivagnāna Siddhiyār into German in two volumes. I have photo copies of these two volumes. Publication details: "Die erlangung des Wissens um Siva O der um dis Erlogung, 2 volumes, Beitrage zur Sudaisien forschung Sudaisien Institute, Universitat, Heidelberg, Vols.49a and 49b. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlas, 1981.

In 1913 appeared R.G. Bandarkar's "Vaishnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems: Strasburg, Verlag Von Karl J. Trubner." This was reprinted by the Asian Educational Services, New Delhi in 1983. Saiva Siddhanta is dealt with in pages 144 to 183. The author is not conversant with Tamil. So he relies mainly on Sanskrit works. He mentions Santāna Ācharyas in passing.

Indian Theism by Nicol Macnicol was published in 1915. It was reprinted by M/s. Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, in 1968. It is to be regretted that Christian prejudice mars the value of this work.

In 1920 appeared 'Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics' edited by James Hastings.

For the first time Tamil Saivism gained International recognition thanks to this Encyclopaedia. The six pages allotted to Tamil Saivism will cover at least 25 pages of

Demy size. The writer of the article, namely Frazer, took pains to study the basic texts and scriptures, at least, in translation, before he put his pen to paper. He also sent his article to J.M. Nallaswami Pillai for perusal and correction. The article therefore reads well and is dependable. The author has made adequate reference to the Āgamanta, the Saiva Upanishads and the Meykanta Sastras. This article is worth reprinting as an independent pamphlet.

"An Outline of the Religious Literature of India" by J.N. Furquhar was published in 1920. Chapter V of this work is relevant for us. It deals, inter alia, with Pasupata Saivas and Āgamic Saivas. The bibliography of this book deals with the literature of Āgamic Saivism as well as the literature of Tamil and Sanskrit schools of Saivism.

J. Estlin Carpenter's "Theism In Medieval India" was published in 1921. This was reprinted in 1977 by Oriental Books Reprint Corporation. Pages 296 to 369 are relevant for us.

This is a well-written book. The noble attempt of the author is to present in English a general view of the phases of Theism in medieval India. The author's comprehension of the keywords of Indian Philosophy is admirable.

Volume V of S.N. Das Gupta's "History of Indian Philosophy" appeared in 1922. This volume contains (1) The Literature of Southern Saivism, (2) Vira Saivism, (3) Philosophy of Sri Kantha, (4) The Saiva Philosophy in the Puranas and (5) Saiva Philosophy in some of the important texts.

The author is a polymath. His writings are vested with authenticity.

The German translation of Tiruvachakam: "Die Hymnen des Manikka Vasaga" by Schomerus was published in 1923. Schomerus lived in Tamil Nādu. He took to Tamil as ducks to water. He held Tamil Saivism in great esteem. He attended the annual conference of Saiva Siddhanta Maha Samajam. He was also conversant with Vaishnavism. However his knowledge of Vaishnavism was not on a par with his knowledge of Tamil Saivism. He wrote in German a comparative study of Mānickavāsakar and Eckhart.

In 1948 appeared a magnificent English translation of Siva Gnāna Bhotham in Oxford, London. The translator is Gordon Matthews. I salute him. His is the best translation of Siva Gnāna Bhotham. He has translated not only the twelve sutras but also *merkols, hetus* and *udārana venpas*. Rich foot-notes enhance the value of this work. In the portion relating to Expository Notes, he has furnished translations of the more important passages found in the Citrurai (lesser commentary) of Sivagnāna yogi. The valiancy of Gordon Matthews is amazing. Ere long this English translation should be published with the Tamil text in juxtaposition. Pity it is that English knowing cognoscenti of Saiva Siddhantam have failed to proclaim the greatness of this peerless translation.

"The Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy of South India is one of the classical products of the Tamil mind. Not only so, but the system, in keeping with the claim inherent in its name, is one of the finest systems of Hindu thought and life." So wrote John H. Piet in his work "A Logical Presentation of the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy" — published by the Christian Literature Society, in 1958. This work contains the thesis which was submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Philosophy, Religion and Ethics, Columbia University. This is a remarkable work which merits reprinting. The author has catalogued a few questions and seeks acceptable answers for these. The sought–for answers can be furnished if a new, revised edition is undertaken.

"An Outline of the History of Saiva Philosophy" by K.C. Pandey was published in 1954. M/s. Motilal Banarsidass reprinted this work in 1986. This is a well-indited opus. However the author is guilty of misinterpreting linga. Linga is not phallus. R.C. Zaehner has vehemently condemned this interpretation in his work *Hinduism*. He affirmed that phallus-worship played no part in the religion of Vedic Aryans and stated further that the Veda itself had mentioned that phallus-worship was characteristic of the enemies of Aryans.

R.C. Zaehner is the celebrated author of the work called 'Hinduism.' This work appeared in 1962 and stands reprinted.

"The Saiva Siddhanta of the South" says the author, "is far more deeply permeated with the devotional spirit from which it sprang ... In it God is love and his every action springs from his loving care for his creatures." Well, is this not the very message Siddhiyār which says: எக்கிரமத்தினாலும் இறை செயல் அருளே என்றும் [Viewed anywise, God's acts constitute for ever mercy].

In 1970, J. Gonda's "Vishnuism and Sivāism" was published. This was reprinted in 1976 by Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi. Strictly speaking this work does not present a regular account of either Vaishnavam or Saivam. It but provides detailed discussions of some of the historical, doctrinal, ritual and literary aspects of these two faiths. Thus, this work supplies a felt-want.

M/s. Munshiram Manoharlal reprinted in 1972 Louis Renou's "Religions of Ancient India," first published in London in 1953.

Renou was Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Literature at Sorbonne. This distinguished Indologist delivered a catena of lectures at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. His work, mentioned supra, constitutes a concise survey of Indian religions, Buddhism excepted. The author says that Siva is the central figure of the Yoga mystery and that Saivism attaches greater importance to the practices, especially to asceticism. He also affirms that the majority of ascetics are Saivites.

J.W.V. Curtis, an American architect, thanks to a grant provided by the American Institute of Indian Studies, stayed in India during 1971-72, observed in depth the architecture of the shrine of Siva in the light of Saiva Siddhanta. He wrote his research work "Motivations of the Temple Architecture in Saiva Siddhanta" in Madras. He had this work printed by Hoe and Co., Madras. He distributed a few copies to his scholar- friends and took with him all the remaining copies to America. I am grateful to Dr. R. Nagaswamy who gave me a copy of this work to me. In my view Curtis is of the confirmed opinion that every Saivite temple is a lapidary demonstration of the Āgamic Saivism which is Saiva Siddhanta.

In this connection I will do well to mention an article from the English Section of Mutthu Vizha Malar of Saiva Siddhanta-p-Peru Mandram, 1986. It bears the caption "Bharata Natya as a Symbolic Expression of Saiva Siddhanta." Its author is Ari Doram, an adept in architecture and sculpture. He was engaged in inditing a Ph.D. thesis entitled "Interpreting Bharata Nātya as an Expression of Saiva Siddhanta." As our ill-luck would have it, he passed away on a sudden, before completing his thesis. According to Ari Doram the entire philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta is eloquently contained in the dancing icon of Nataraja.

In 1974 appeared The Westcott–Teape Lectures of Bishop Stephen Neill. The Bishop says: "Although I have been absent from India for many years and have Not had access to great libraries during the composition of these lectures, it seemed to me appropriate to go back to the South Indian tradition and to the world of Tamil thought and literature which I have loved so well, and to develop a train of thought within that world." His work is called "Bhakti: Hindu and Christian." The author affirms that the very existence of the universe is a sign of Siva's grace.

In 1975 was published "The Tao of Physics" by Fritjof Capra. It had undergone more than twenty reprints. This book is an exploration of the parallels between modern Physics and Eastern mysticism. The author records in his book his experiences which helped him realize gradually that a consistent view of the world is beginning to emerge from modern Physics which is harmonious with the ancient Eastern Wisdom. He affirms thus: "For the modern physicists, then, Shiva's dance is the dance of the sub-atomic matter. As in Hindu mythology, it is a continual dance of creation and destruction involving the whole cosmos, the basis of all existence and of all natural phenomena. Hundreds of years ago Indian artists created visual images of dancing Shivas in a beautiful series of bronzes. In our time physicists have used the most advanced technology to portray the patterns of the cosmic dance. The bubble chamber photographs of interacting particles which bear testimony to the continual rhythm of creation and destruction in the universe, are visual images of the dance of Shiva equalling those of the Indian artists in beauty and profound significance. The metaphor of the cosmic dance thus unifies ancient mythology, regular art and modern physics. It is indeed as Coomaraswamy has said: "Poetry, but none the less, science."

Albrecht Frenz and P. Nagarajan are the translators of the Tiruvachakam into German. In 1977, this work hight Tiruasagam Von Manikkavasagar" was printed by South India Press, Karaikkudi. Sixteen plates are included in this work which are illustrative of the life of St. Mānickavāchakar.

1982: Dr. Glenn E. Yocum: Hymns To The Dancing Siva: Heritage Publishers, New Delhi.

"The study of Tiruvāchakam" says the author, an American, "will be an essay in the history of religions. The goal will be to understand a religious tradition as it is reflected in the life of one man. In a very real sense, all history is based upon individual lives. It is in them that the inter-connections between historical periods and the influence of various traditions can best be glimpsed. It is only there the 'structures,' 'forms' and patterns which frequently are the concern of *Religionswissenchaft* are lived."

The above work is the outcome of scholarly labour undertaken with commendable sympathy and devotion. The author told me that he became a vegetarian after his cultivation of the Tiruvāchakam.

Experiencing Siva, edited by F.W. Clothey and Bruce Long published in 1983, by Manohar, New Delhi, is a book worth its weight in gold and diamond. It grew out of a workshop held at the University of Pennsylvania in 1973, sponsored by the Conference of Religion in South India. Almost all the participants were well acquainted with Tamil Saivism.

This book seeks to invite consideration of some of the less explored aspects of Saivism. Three are the themes here dealt with, they being (1) Saiva Motives in Literature and Thought, (2) Practice and Worship and (3) Saivism in process.

Ashutoshprakhasan Sansthan, Varanasi, published in 1984 Dr.Rama Ghose's "Grace in Saiva Siddhanta." It is a study of the Tiru Arut Payan, a Meikanta Sastra. Rama Ghose is a Bengali who lives in Kāsi. She studied Saiva Siddhantam under the greatest savant of Tamil Saivism, namely Dr.Krishna Sivaraman and his chela Dr. T.B. Siddhalingaiah. Dr. Ghose has translated all the hundred distichs of the Tiru Arut Payan. I have visited her house more times than one and her collection of Saiva Siddhanta works is amazing. She has participated in national, intra-national and international seminars on Saiva Siddhanta.

M/s. Motilal Banarsidass published in 1985 Rohan–A Dunuwilas's work 'Saiva Siddhanta Theology.' This provides a context for Hindu-Christian Dialogue.

The author brings to the notice of his reader the following important facts.

1. The Saiva Siddhanta is one of the most vigorous and extensively studied denominations in South India. What is often overlooked is that prior to its development in the Tamil South it was an all-India denomination which had a history dating from the seventh century A.D.

2. The author surveys for the first time the whole tradition of the Siddhanta in its historical, literary and theological contexts. He then focuses on Aghora Siva (A.D. 1100), the theologian who bridged the two traditions, Sanskrit and Tamil.

3. Aghora Siva's solution is significant. It reveals an inner plurality of the Godhead untainted by the phenomenal. This – the divine plurality in unity –, is Saiva Siddhanta's fundamental insight.

In 1988 was published S.C. Banerjee's "A Brief History of Tantra Literature" by Naya Prokash, Calcutta. The author is a Bengali scholar. Chapter VII of his work deals with Saiva Siddhanta. The following observation of the author is significant. "It is true that Saivism of South India reveals marked similarities with its Kashmir counterpart. But, it is, by no means, correct to presume that the former was modelled on the latter ... The edifice of Saiva Siddhanta rests on the pillars of two main trends, one Vedic and the other Āgamic."

'The Origin and Development of Hinduism' by A.L. Basham was published by the Oxford University Press (Indian Edition) in 1990.

This work of Basham was posthumously published. The following observations of the author are significant. "The most important Tamil Saiva sect was the Saiva Siddhanta, which in the thirteenth century gave theological and ritual expression to the devotional hymns of Nāyanmār. It emphasized divine grace and the distinction between God and the self."

Jose Pereira's 'Hindu Theology: Themes, Texts and Structures' was first published in U.S.A., in 1976. M/s. Motilal Banarsidass reprinted this work in 1991. Pages

166 to 175 and pages 468 to 471 are relevant for our purposes. According to A.L. Basham, this book is the finest book of its kind. True. Yet we do think that the author – Professor of Theology –, at Fordham University, should have devoted a few more pages to Tamil Saivism.

David Dean Shulman is the first to translate an entire Tirumurai into English. He is a polymath and polyglot. His "Songs of The Harsh Devotee: The Tevāram of Cuntaramūrttināyanār," was published in 1990 by the University of Pennsylvania Studies on South Asia. The following remarks of Dr.Glenn E.Yocum who reviewed the work constitute a fair assessment of Shulman's achievement. "If we allow ... that a good, well-contextualised translation is perhaps the most valuable kind of humanistic scholarship, then Shulman's book is clearly his major scholarly contribution to date."

Princeton University Press published in 1991 'Ritual in An Oscillating Universe: Worshipping Siva in Medieval India,' indited by Richard H. Davis. About this opus, Paul B. Courtright, Emory University, observes: "Richard Davis takes us deeper than anyone else, has to date into the textual and praxis dimensions of Saiva Siddhanta ritual and its cosmological world. His work puts forth in a single and sustained way the religious universe of this important strand of the Saiva tradition in Hinduism. It is an outstanding book."

The plates included in this work beautifully demonstrate the mudras forming part of Siva-puja. The demonstrator is the much respected Siva Sri K.A. Sabharatna Sivācharya of Madras.

Though many more works should be included in this article, as space forbids, only bare details of a few more are mentioned below:

1. 1987: Nityasumangali by Saskia C. Kersonboom-Story, Motilal Banarsidass.
2. 1993: Harmony of Religions by Thomas Manninezhath, Motilal Banarsidass.
3. 1993: The Hungry God by David Shulman, The University of Chicago Press.
4. 1994: Seminar Papers of The Third International Seminar on Saiva Siddhantam – 1988, edited by Rama Ghose and T.N. Ramachandran, Dharmapura Ādhinam.
5. 1995: Periya Puraṇam in Telugu translated by Dr. M. Subba Rao, Hyderabad, A.P.
6. 1996: The Dance of Siva by David Smith, Cambridge University Press.
7. 1999: The Embodiment of Bhakti by Karen Pechilis Prentiss, New York, O.U.P.
8. 2001: Theology of the Saivāgamas by Dr. S.C. Nandimath, Thiruvananthapuram.
9. 2002: Siva Bhakta Vilāsam translated into English by Lingeswara Rao, Tiruvannamalai and
10. 2006: The History of The Holy Servants of the Lord Siva: A Translation of the Ṗeriya Purānam of Cēkkiḻār, Transford Publishing, Canada.

May Siva Bhakti flourish for ever.

சேக்கிழார் அடிப்பொடி முதுமுனைவர்

தி.ந..இராமச்சந்திரன் சதாபிஷேக வெளியீடு